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COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

VOL. III.

COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS

OR

LONDON UNDER THE LAST GEORGES

1760—1830

BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY

VOL. III.

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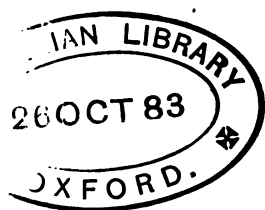
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TO

JOSEPH COWEN, ESQ., M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Few of our public men have facilitated the cause of progress, and the well-being of others, as you have done: your career has been full of noble deeds, of manly sympathy, and of fearless utterances in behalf of the weak and oppressed in all Europe.

As a slight tribute of the admiration I personally feel, I dedicate to you these volumes; trusting that my humble efforts may not be unworthy of your distinguished name,

I remain,

Faithfully yours always,

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

PREFACE TO VOLS. III. AND IV.

THE popularity of the first volumes of this work—practically proved by a demand which sent them into a second edition in three weeks, and out of print in as many months—has induced me to continue the pictures of Court Life under the Georges.

The reigns of George III. and George IV. are no less interesting and instructive, to those who study the social history and manners of courts, than those of George I. and George II.; and, it is mournful to assert, are far more scandalous. George III., it is true, was from the day of his marriage a moral man; but the grossly voluptuous and glaringly corrupt example

of his immediate predecessors yet affected the conduct of his courtiers and tainted them grievously. Concerning George IV. there can be no second opinion.

As in the former volumes, so in these, I have omitted as much as possible all reference to politics, save where they are responsible for the actions of kings, princes, and courtiers. No statement is made without authority; and due care has been taken to paint faithful portraits of the various characters introduced. To give a vivid picture of the Court life, neither time nor labour has been spared. For this purpose, I have consulted upwards of five hundred volumes, principally autobiographies, biographies, correspondence, and diaries, likewise manuscripts, pamphlets, newspapers, and the ballad literature of the day.

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

London, Sept., 1883.

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COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

CHAPTER I.

The Child Born to be King—A Dull, Good Boy—
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King—The Story of Hannah Lightfoot—The King is
Dead—A New Order of Things.

ON the 4th of June, 1738, a male child was
born to their Royal Highnesses Frederick
and Augusta, Prince and Princess of Wales,
who subsequently gained the reputation of
being the dullest prince in Europe. It hap-
pened that this child born to be king first
saw the light in Norfolk House, St. James's
Square. Only a few months previously,

His Sacred Majesty George II. had quarrelled with the heir-apparent, and driven him and his family from St. James's Palace.

A little while after this infant had come into the world, he gave such strong indications of his intentions of immediately quitting it that it was deemed advisable to have him baptised at once, that he might depart a Christian. Dr. Secker, Lord Bishop of Oxford and rector of St. James's parish, was therefore summoned in hot haste, and performed the ceremony; according to the manuscript entry in the register of births in St. James's parish, 'the name pronounced upon the occasion was George William Frederick.'

When this triple-named prince arrived at the age of six years, his education commenced, and he and his brother Edward, afterwards Duke of York, were placed under the charge of Dr. Ayscough. This reverend gentleman had won the Prince of Wales's mammon-loving heart by his management of the privy purse. Mr. Pelham remembered being told by a very worthy man that 'Dr. Ayscough was a great rouge.' He was certainly a man of parts, not adverse

to his own advancement, nor bound by any narrow orthodox prejudices; he could flatter, mimic, and preach heterodoxical doctrines with equal ease, and indeed his various talents soon enabled him to become Bishop of Bristol.

Under this tutor, the prince, who grew up a dull, good boy, made but little progress. He had indeed, without any direction from his reverend preceptor, learned several pages of hymns, writ by one Dr. Doddridge, a dissenting clergyman; but it was doubtful if he understood them. At the age of eleven years, the future King of Great Britain could not read the English language correctly; when the Princess of Wales was informed of this, and complained to Dr. Ayscough, he cheerfully replied that it mattered little, ‘the prince could make Latin verses.’

Later on, his preceptors were Dr. Thomas, Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Hayter, Bishop of Norwich, and Mr. George Scott. Many years afterwards, when the prince was king, he complained that ‘most serious inconvenience had arisen from disagreements and intrigues amongst those who were entrusted with the care of his

education.' The Lord Bishop of Norwich he considered 'an intriguing man, influenced in his conduct by the disappointment he met with in failing to get the Archbishopric of Canterbury,' and added, 'that his lordship was the author of the gross and wicked calumny on George Scott, accusing him, a man of the purest mind and most innocent conduct, of having attempted to poison his wife.'

In 1751, Frederick, Prince of Wales, after a few days' illness, died in the arms of his favourite, Desnoyers, the French dancing-master, who had just been playing the fiddle to him, whilst the gay courtiers in the next room were diverting themselves with cards. From the date of his death, the eyes of the nation were turned on George William Frederick, then a lad of thirteen, who suddenly became heir to the throne. When the news was conveyed to him of his father's death, he turned pale and laid his hand on his breast. The courtly Ayscough asked him if he were unwell.

'I feel,' said the lad, 'something here, just as I did when I saw the two workmen fall from the scaffold at Kew.'

Ten days after the prince's death, the king paid a visit to the princess and her children, and exhibited unusual emotion, wept, embraced the young Princess Augusta, and told her brothers 'they must be brave boys, obedient to their mother, and thus deserve the fortune to which they were born.' A month later, George William Frederick was created Prince of Wales, and placed by the king under the governorship of Lord Harcourt. According to Horace Walpole, Harcourt was a civil and sheepish man, who thought 'that he discharged his trust conscientiously, if on no account he neglected to make the prince turn out his toes.' His Royal Highness was a quiet youth, who, according to his grandsire, 'was good for nothing except to read the Bible to his mother.' That lady had not a very high opinion of her son; 'he was a very honest boy, but she wished he was a little more forward and less childish at his age, and she hoped his preceptors would improve him.' She furthermore volunteered the information that 'those about him knew no more [of him] than if they had never seen him.' Lord Waldegrave, who succeeded Lord Harcourt as governor to the

prince, says he found His Royal Highness ‘uncommonly full of princely prejudices contracted in the nursery and improved by the bed-chamber women and pages of the back stairs.’ There can be no doubt but much of the narrow-mindedness and bigotry that afterwards distinguished George III. was due to his mother’s early training, and to the strict influence which she held over him. From his earliest years she strove to keep him apart from the nobility of his own age, and, as he grew up, her vigilance in this respect increased—a fact which one of George III.’s sons afterwards remarked was ‘an unfortunate circumstance,’ of which he ‘saw evident marks almost daily.’

When spoken to on the subject of allowing the prince to mix more freely with his future subjects, she declared she ‘was highly sensible how necessary it was that the prince should keep company with men, but such was the universal profligacy, such the character and conduct of the young people of distinction, that she was really afraid to have them near her children; she well knew that women could not inform him, for their behaviour was inde-

cent, low, and much against their own interests by making themselves so very cheap.'

During her husband's lifetime, the princess had carefully suppressed her inclinations to meddle in public affairs; but when he was removed, and her ambition of one day becoming a queen frustrated, she determined that, if she could not govern personally, she would at least rule the kingdom through her son. She was, however, a clever woman, and adopted a politic course of action. On the morning of the prince's death, she rose at eight o'clock, 'and burned, or said she burned,' as Horace Walpole writes, all her husband's papers. Her next step was to recommend herself and her children to His Majesty, whom she heartily detested.

'The king and she,' says Walpole, 'both took their parts at once; she of flinging herself entirely into his hands and studying nothing but his pleasure, but with winding what interest she got with him to the advantage of her own and the princes' friends; the king of acting the tender grandfather; which he who had never acted the tender father grew so pleased with representing, that he soon became it in earnest.'

1

But, as she told Bubb Dodington in one of the confidential conversations when they had dined and played at comet, she did not allow the king's kindness to the children, or his civility to herself, to impose on her. 'She wished the king was less civil, and that he put less of their money into his pocket; that he had got full £30,000 per annum by the poor prince's death. If he would but have given them the Duchy of Cornwall to have paid his debts, it would have been something. Should resentments be carried beyond the grave? Should the innocent suffer? Was it becoming for so great a king to leave his son's debts unpaid?' Bubb Dodington said it was impossible to new-make people; the king could not now be altered. She said she could not bear it, nor help sometimes giving the king to understand her in the strongest and most disagreeable light. She had done it more than once, and she would tell how it happened the last time.

'You know,' continued she, 'that the Crown has a power of resumption of Carlton House and gardens for a certain sum. The king had not long since an inclination to see them, and he

came to make me a visit there; we walked in the gardens, and he, seemingly mighty pleased with them, commended them much, and told me that he was extremely glad I had got so very pretty a place. I replied it was a very pretty place, but that the prettiness of a place was an objection to it, when one was not sure to keep it. The king said that there was indeed a power of resumption in the Crown for £4,000, but surely I could not imagine that it could ever be made use of against me; how could such a thought come into my head? I answered no, it was not that which I was afraid of, but I was afraid there were those who had a better right to it than either the Crown or I. He said, "Oh! no, no, I do not understand that; that cannot be." I replied I did not pretend to understand these things, but I was afraid there were such people. He said, "Oh! I know nothing of that; I do not understand it," and immediately turned the discourse.'

So far did her good graces succeed in winning the king's regard that she was appointed regent in case of His Majesty's death, to the exclusion of the king's only surviving son, Wil-

liam, Duke of Cumberland, commonly called Billy the Butcher, from the atrocities he had countenanced after the battle of Culloden. Between the princess and the duke a hearty hatred existed, which deepened to distrust on her side, and to jealousy on his, because of the power which this appointment might give her. She spoke of the duke's discourtesy, and complained that, though she had been at Kew the whole summer, he had never vouchsafed her one visit; and, when she was ill and reported dying, he had never sent to make inquiries regarding her health. Dreading and disliking him, she took care to instil the same feelings into her son's mind, and to make him acquainted with what has been called 'the national antipathy' towards the man 'who loved blood.' So thoroughly did she impart this dread, which served not only then, but in the future, to destroy all influence which the duke might otherwise have had over his nephew, that one day, when the prince was alone with his uncle, the latter, to amuse him, having taken down a sword and drawn it, the boy turned pale with fright, believing he was about to be murdered.

The maternal influence over the prince was blended and strengthened by that of John, Earl of Bute, who soon became a power in the royal household. Horace Walpole speaks of him as a ‘Scotchman who, having no estate, had passed his youth in studying mathematics in his own little island, then simples in the hedges about Twickenham, and at five and thirty had fallen in love with his own figure, which he produced at masquerades in becoming dresses, and in plays which he acted in private companies with a set of his own relations.’

His love of masquerades and plays was sufficient to recommend him to Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was a thorough dilettante, and was never so happy as when surrounded by players and fiddlers and such children of the Muses. Lord Bute was soon made one of the lords of the bed-chamber, and after the prince’s death he continued the friend and counsellor of the princess. So assiduous indeed were his attentions to her that the public were not long in discovering they were prompted by a much warmer attachment than that of mere loyalty.

‘He has a good person, fine legs, and a

theatrical air of the greatest importance,' says Lord Waldegrave, who pleasantly adds—'The late Prince of Wales, who was not over-nice in the choice of ministers, used frequently to say that Bute was a fine, showy man, who would make an excellent ambassador in a Court where there was no business. Such was His Royal Highness's opinion of his political abilities, but the sagacity of the princess had discovered other accomplishments of which the prince her husband may not perhaps have been the most competent judge.'

Whether the princess was at Kew or Carlton House, my Lord Bute's visits continued with equal regularity.

'The eagerness of the pages of the backstairs to let her know whenever Lord Bute arrived,' says Horace Walpole, 'and some other symptoms, contributed to dispel the ideas that had been conceived of the rigour of her widowhood. On the other hand, the favoured personage, naturally ostentatious of his person, and of haughty carriage, seemed by no means desirous of concealing his conquest. His bows grew more theatric, his graces contracted

some meaning, and the beauty of his leg was constantly displayed in the eyes of the poor, captivated princess. Indeed, the nice observers of the Court thermometer, who often foresee a change of weather before it actually happens, had long thought that Her Royal Highness was likely to choose younger ministers than that formal piece of empty mystery, Cresset; or the matron-like decorum of Sir George Lee Her simple husband had forced an air of intrigue even on his wife. When he affected to retire into gloomy *allées* with Lady Middlesex, he used to bid the princess walk with Lord Bute. As soon as the prince was dead, they walked more and more in honour of his memory.'

For reasons which had the object of forwarding his ambitious schemes, Lord Bute added his efforts to those of the princess, in cutting the prince off as much as possible from his grandfather's courtiers, and 'none but their immediate and lowest creatures were suffered to approach him. Except at his levées, where none are seen as they are, he saw nobody, and none saw him.'

‘The prince,’ says one of the gossips of the time, ‘lived shut up with his mother and Lord Bute, and must have thrown them under some difficulties: their connection was not easily reconcileable to the devotion which they had infused into the prince; the princess could not wish him always present, and yet dreaded his being out of her sight. His brother Edward, who received a thousand mortifications, was seldom suffered to be with him; and the Princess Augusta, now a woman, was, to facilitate some privacy for the princess, dismissed from supping with her mother, and sent back to cheese-cakes and her little sister Elizabeth, on pretence that meat at night would fatten her too much.’

Their power over him was evinced on the occasion of the king’s proposing that he should marry; the prince was only eighteen, but His Majesty was anxious to see him settled before his (George II.’s) death, lest afterwards the princess might contrive an alliance for him with one of the Saxe-Gotha family, her relations, for whom His Majesty had no predilection. Accordingly, when at Hanover, he met

the Princess of Wolfenbüttel, niece of Frederick II. of Prussia, with whose accomplishments and amiability he became so enamoured that he was desirous of making her his granddaughter, as he was too old to make her his wife. When, however, the princess dowager caught a rumour of this, she waxed exceeding wroth at the possible prospect of her power over her son being interfered with and perhaps overthrown. She threw off all pretence of subservient obedience to the king, and metaphorically shook her fist in his face. She should 'let him know how ill she took it; that she had eight other children to be provided for; that she hoped he would think of doing for them, and not leave her eldest son those young children to take care of before he had one of his own; that it was probable the prince might have so many, that hers could not expect much provision.' Moreover, she disliked the proposed alliance. 'The young woman was said to be handsome, and have good qualities and abundance of wit, but if she took after her mother, the Duchess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, who was the most intriguing, meddling, satirical, sarcastic person

in the world, who made mischief wherever she went, she would certainly not do for George.'

Armed, therefore, with right womanly jealousy, she informed the prince he was about being made a victim to gratify the king's private interests in the little Electorate of Hanover, and fearing lest the contemplation of such a sacrifice might not prove disagreeable to one possessing 'a vigorous, healthy constitution, to whom it might reasonably be supposed that a matrimonial companion would not be unacceptable,' Her Highness of Wolfenbüttel was represented as being hideous and hateful; indeed, a kind of female beast with whom Prince Beauty must not wed. The prince therefore conceived a strong aversion to his proposed bride, and, to His Majesty's great chagrin, refused her hand, which so incensed the old man, then passed his seventieth year, that he declared, if he were but twenty years younger, she should never have been refused by a Prince of Wales, for he should have made her Queen of England.

This act on the part of the prince showed the king how much his grandson was governed

by his mother, and he resolved, if possible, to remove him from her influence and from her residence at Leicester House. As he had now reached his eighteenth year, and was therefore legally of age, His Majesty sent a message to the prince informing him that he would grant him an income of £40,000 a year and settle an establishment for him, and that he had already given orders that apartments in St. James's and in Kensington Palace should be fitted up for his use. The princess, however, was not to be outwitted; she made her son write to accept the £40,000, but at the same time entreating His Majesty 'not to divide him from his mother, which would be a most sensible affliction to both.' It is worth noting that at the time he wrote this it was well known, as Bubb Doddington informs us, 'that he did not live with his mother either in town or country,' though the courtier carefully refrains from mentioning where or with whom the prince resided.

To accept the annuity and decline a separate residence for the maintenance of which it was intended, was a possibility that the king had not anticipated; but it was now impossible for

him to withdraw an allowance which had not been made conditional with the full acceptance of the offer, and so matters were allowed to rest for some time.

George William Frederick, though the dullest prince in Europe, and perhaps the most carefully guarded, proved that he, like all common humanity, was susceptible to love's ways by falling a victim to the tender passion on more occasions than one. Concerning what was probably the first of his amours, a tale hangs of which many versions have been given. So far, however, as the story can be cleared from its surrounding mystery, it runs as follows:—

Hannah Lightfoot, a young and beautiful girl called 'the fair Quaker,' lived with her parents, who kept a linen-draper's shop at the corner of St. James's Market, where the prince continually saw her as he passed from Leicester House, his mother's residence, to St. James's Palace. His heart was immediately touched by the passion which levels all ranks, and he began to sigh for the companionship of the fascinating Hannah. Pondering over the means by which his object could be accomplished with-

out alarming the fair Quaker, he conceived the idea of engaging the services of one of these discreet friends who are ever ready to aid princes in the pursuit of their desires.

His choice at once fell on Miss Chudleigh, a courtier with whom his father and grandfather had been in love while she was maid-of-honour to his mother, and who had varied the course of her romance by committing bigamy and making sad havoc of the decalogue generally. Such an office as the prince trusted to her skill was naturally in accordance with her taste, and with that brilliant talent for intrigue which she had already exercised with so much personal success. Nor was she found wanting on this occasion; she soon discovered a convenient and private place for a rendezvous at the house of one Perryn at Knightsbridge, where the royal lover met the fair lady, and became yet more deeply enamoured of her charms.

A statement has been made in 'The Secret History of the Court of England, by the Right Honourable Lady Anne Hamilton, sister of his Grace the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, and of the Countess of Dunmore,' published

in 1832, that the prince was secretly married to Hannah Lightfoot; and this assertion was repeated in a now forgotten pamphlet, entitled, 'The Appeal for Royalty,' by no less a personage than Lavinia Jannette Horton Ryves, 'calling herself Princess of Cumberland and Duchess of Lancaster.' Moreover, in the latter a copy of a supposed certificate of marriage between the Quaker and the prince was given, signed by William Pitt as one of the witnesses. This certificate, however, at a late memorable trial, was pronounced 'a gross and rank forgery.'

The most probable story regarding the royal love affair, is that which is told in the *Monthly Magazine* for April, 1821, the year after the king's death, and subsequently authenticated by other statements from various writers. This narrative states that, the royal lover's relatives taking alarm at his passion for Hannah Lightfoot, Miss Chudleigh called on Isaac Axford, 'shopman to Barton the grocer on Ludgate Hill,' furthermore described as 'a poor-hearted fellow,' and proposed that he should marry Hannah, when a considerable sum of money would be given him; to which he consent-

ed, and immediately after the ceremony she was carried away by the prince. This version of the royal intrigue is repeated with some minor details in a pamphlet entitled, 'An Historical Fragment.' A friend of the Lightfoot family, who received a letter on the subject of the marriage from a cousin of the fair Quaker's, sent a copy of the epistle to the *Monthly Magazine* of October, 1821. In this letter it is stated that Hannah 'eloped in 1754, and was married to Isaac Axford at Keith's Chapel, which my father discovered about three weeks after, and none of our family having seen her since, though her mother had a letter or two from her, but at last died of grief.' The person who encloses the communication adds, 'The general belief of her friends was, that she was taken into keeping by Prince George directly after her marriage to Axford, but never lived with him.'

That such a union actually took place is now beyond all doubt, the late Mr. John Jesse having discovered its entry in the registers of marriage celebrated by Alexander Keith in the books kept in his chapel, and removed in 1754 to St. George's Church, Hanover Square; the

writer has obtained a certificate of the marriage, which was performed on December 11, 1753.*

Hannah—according to a writer in *Notes and Queries*, July, 1853, who had, when a lad, heard his mother speak of the fair Quaker, whose aunt, Anna Eleanor Lightfoot, was next-door neighbour to his grandfather—after her disappearance was advertised for by her friends; when some time had elapsed, they obtained information of her retreat, stating that she was well provided for, and her condition became known to them.

* Mr. William J. Thoms, in his pamphlet entitled 'Hannah Lightfoot,' thoroughly discredits the story that the good young prince ever had an intrigue with the fair Quaker. 'Whether the king,' (George III.) he says in his preface, 'has or has not been made the scapegoat for his father, as has been suggested, or any of his brothers, is not the question which I undertake to investigate.' Frederick, Prince of Wales, however, died in March, 1751, two years before the Lightfoot marriage and subsequent scandal took place. Again Mr. Thoms says, 'The first thing that strikes one as remarkable with regard to this piece of scandal is that no allusion to it is to be found (at least, as far as I am able to trace) in any historical, political, or satirical work published during the lifetime of George III.' But two months after the publication of this statement, he announces in the pages of *Notes and Queries* that his 'attention has been called to a printed allusion to this scandal as early as the year 1779,' which occurs in one of the works of William Combe.

‘A retreat was provided for her,’ says this writer, ‘in one of those large houses surrounded with a high wall and garden, in the district of Cat-and-Mutton Fields, on the east side of Hackney Road, leading from Mile-End Road, where she lived, and, it is said, died.’

Huish, in his ‘Public and Private Life of his late Excellent and most Gracious Majesty George III.,’ which is dedicated to that monarch’s successor to the throne, refers to this amour. ‘His affections became enchained,’ he says, speaking of the prince. ‘He looked no more to Saxe-Gotha nor to Brunswick for an object on which to lavish his love; he found one in the secret recesses of Hampton, whither he often repaired, concealed by the protecting shades of night, and there he experienced, what seldom falls to the lot of princes, the bliss of the purest love. The object of his affections became a mother, and strengthened the bond between them. Being one day in the company of the late Duke of Chandos, who appears to have been honoured with his confidence, he expressed himself in the following terms: “Ah, Chandos, you are a happy man; you are at

liberty to live with the woman of your choice, whilst I, the future king of a great nation, shall perhaps, at some not very distant period, be obliged to take to my arms a woman whom I have never seen before, and whom perhaps I may never love.”

Hannah Lightfoot is said to have borne the prince two sons, one of whom became mad, and, according to the authority last quoted from *Notes and Queries*, committed suicide. Another of them, named George Rex, went to the Cape of Good Hope, concerning whom Mr. William Harrison, of Rockmount, Isle of Man, writes to *Notes and Queries*, February 9, 1861: ‘With respect to the son born of this marriage’ (the supposed legal union between the prince and the Quaker), ‘and said to be still living at the Cape of Good Hope, I think there must be some mistake. I was at the Cape in 1830, and spent some time at Mr. George Rex’s hospitable residence at the Knysna. I understood from him that he had been about thirty-four years a resident in the colony, and I should suppose he was then about sixty-eight years of age, of a strong, robust appearance, and the exact resemblance

in features to George III. This would bring him to about the time as stated when George III. married Hannah Lightfoot. On Mr. Rex's first arrival in the colony, he occupied a high situation in the colonial government, and received an extensive grant of land at the Knysna. He retired there, and made most extensive improvements. His eldest son was named John, at the time I was there, living with his father, and will now most probably be the representative of George Rex.' It is worth noting that, when the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Cape, he was entertained by a Mr. Rex, probably the Mr. John Rex just referred to.

On the morning of October 25, 1760, George II. died suddenly, and George William Frederick became king. The manner in which he received the intelligence of his grandfather's death was eminently characteristic of the new monarch, and gave proof of that dissimulation which he practised through life. He was riding from Kew to London, when he was overtaken by a man on horseback, who handed him a piece of coarse white-brown paper, on which was written one word, 'Schrieder.' This was

simply the name of a German valet-de-chambre in the service of the late king, with whom the prince had privately entered into an agreement that His Majesty's death should be communicated to him, immediately it took place, in this private manner.

He received the intelligence with all the hereditary stolidity of his race, briefly bade the messenger keep silent, and then, turning to his groom and informing him, by way of excuse for his return, that his horse was lame, rode back to Kew. When the man ventured to state that the horse was in good condition, George William Frederick made no reply until he was dismounting; then he remarked, with his usual calmness, 'I have said the horse is lame—I forbid you to say the contrary.' So he may be said to have ascended the throne with a lie upon his lips.

On Sunday, the next day after the death of his late majesty of blessed memory, the new king was proclaimed; first before his residence, Saville House, where the officers of state, nobility, and privy counsellors were present with the officers of arms, all being on foot;

then at Charing Cross; at Wood Street, in Cheapside; and finally at the Royal Exchange, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Leeds, and Lord Falmouth attending the procession into the City. On Tuesday there was a levée held at Saville House.

‘To-day,’ writes Horace Walpole, ‘England kissed hands, so did I, and it is more comfortable to kiss hands with all England than to have all England ask why one kisses hands. There is great dignity and grace in the king’s manner. I don’t say this, like my dear Madame de Sévigné, because he was civil to me, but the part is well acted. If they do as well behind the scenes as upon the stage, it will be a very complete reign.’

The opening of the new *régime* showed every sign of prosperity. Abroad, conquests had crowned the English arms with fortune and glory; at home, the factions which had disturbed the peace and threatened the dynasty of the two first Hanoverian monarchs had now become extinct; the fever and discontent of Jacobitism had gradually worked itself out, leaving the country in a more healthy state, and the

new king had, without any merit of his, gained the popularity of his subjects, on account of his youth, and of his being the first monarch of his line who was born a Briton. Moreover, the nation rejoiced in a state of prosperity such as it had seldom experienced, whilst the administration was presided over by William Pitt, one of the most able and brilliant statesmen the country had ever known. Yet this fair prospect was gradually and totally changed by a proud and narrow-minded woman and an ambitious, inexperienced man.

Meanwhile all England generally, and London in particular, was filled with the great social event which had taken place. A monarch who had reached his seventy-seventh year, who had become blind and deaf, whose levée-room had grown to have 'an air of a lion's den,' was removed by death, and in his place an English-speaking king, just entering into manhood, ascended the throne. It was true his subjects had seen or heard little of him; as Lord Chesterfield said, 'He was like a new sultan dragged out of the seraglio by the princess and Lord Bute and placed upon the

throne.' But their slight knowledge of him made them all the more curious to see this man who had been made their king by the grace of God. Accordingly courtiers and commoners rushed to be presented or to present addresses, and the drawing-rooms were filled with sufficient subjects to set up half a dozen petty kings. Amongst others, the good Lord Mayor, with his aldermen all, came from the City, and, with as grave a face as he could assume, told His Most Gracious Majesty 'that as Almighty God had pleased to call to His mercy the late sovereign lord, King George II. of blessed memory, whose glorious reign and princely virtues must ever make his memory dear to a grateful people, he, the Lord Mayor of London City, begged leave to approach his gracious sovereign's royal person, and to congratulate him on his accession to the imperial crown of these happy realms.'

The merchants of London likewise presented an address containing many expressions of loyalty, but this was far eclipsed by that of the archbishop, dean and chapter, archdeacon and clergy of the diocese of Canterbury, who,

after condoling with His Sacred Majesty on the recent affliction dealt him in the death of his grandfather, assured him of their sincerest joy on seeing the throne filled by one who was heir to his virtues as well as his dominions, one whose hereditary good dispositions had caused him to be received as a blessing to his people.

All the thoroughfares leading to Saville House were thronged with coaches and chairs, with lacqueys, soldiers, and idlers, who collected to see the courtiers making their way, or returning from seeing the new king; the ladies attired in mourning that consisted of 'black bombazine, plain muslin, or long-lawn linnen, with crape hoods and crape fans;' the men of quality also in black suits, 'without buttons on the sleeves and pockets, plain muslin or long-lawn cravats and wrappers, shamoy shoes and gloves, crape hat-bands, and black swords and buckles.'

On Sunday the king held a drawing-room at St. James's, when he exhibited a mighty gracious air, and had a smile for all who approached him, and informed his stout old uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, he would introduce a new custom into his family—that of living in peace with

all its members. Indeed, the new reign not only began with a prospect of domestic peace, but with a hearty denouncement of wickedness. Before he had been a week on the throne, the king issued a proclamation for the encouragement of piety and virtue, and the suppression of 'all vice, profaneness, debauchery, and immorality, which are so highly displeasing to God, so great a reproach to religion and government, and have so fatal a tendency to the corruption of many of our loving subjects;' furthermore, the proclamation prohibited all persons 'of what degree or quality soever from playing on the Lord's day at dice, cards, or any other game whatever, either in public or private houses, or other places whatsoever.'

All the ways and manners that had hitherto obtained in the godless Court of the late king were, it appeared, to be reversed; persons of piety and virtue (if such could be found) were to be distinguished by royal favour, the wicked to be punished. So alarmed did Miss Chudleigh become at such a turning of the tables, that this fair courtier, who had permitted old George II. to stroke her under the chin, and

kiss her at the drawing-rooms, assumed a virtue if she had it not, and, to mark her rigour, called for the council books of the subscription concert, and struck off the name of Mrs. Naylor, whose life was not, alas! surrounded with an odour of sanctity. Perhaps it is not wonderful that, owing to these pious changes, Dr. Secker, now Archbishop of Canterbury, whom the late king so detested that he had refused to hear him preach, should in the first days of the religious reign flatter himself with the idea of becoming first minister.

‘The bishop,’ writes Horace Walpole, ‘who had been bred a presbyterian and man mid-wife—which sect and profession he had dropped for a season, while he was president of a very free-thinking club—has been converted by Bishop Talbot, whose relation he married, and had his faith settled in a prebend of Durham.’

His spiritual lordship was unwearying in his attentions on the new king, having ‘great hopes from the king’s goodness that he should make something of him—that is, something bad.’

CHAPTER II.

Loyal Subjects—The King at the Playhouse—What His Majesty said to Lady Susan—The Princess Dowager's Alarm—In Search of a Queen—An Unknown Princess—Her Journey to England—The Marriage Ceremony—Loyal Addresses—The most Brilliant Drawing-room ever Known—Some Distinguished Courtiers—The Coronation Ceremony—What George Selwyn said—Charles Edward Stuart at the Coronation Banquet.

NOT only the courtiers but the people were ready to honour the king.

‘It is not strange,’ says Lord Macaulay, ‘that the sentiment of loyalty—a sentiment which had lately seemed to be as much out of date as the belief in witches, or the practice of pilgrimage—should from the day of his accession have begun to revive.’

The first night he went to the play, a vast crowd assembled round the theatre; so great, indeed, was the crush, that the ladies could not

get to their boxes where their servants sat keeping places for them. At His Majesty's entrance the audience rose up and sang 'God save the King' in chorus, and towards the close of the second act the throng outside, whose numbers had increased every moment, forced open the doors, and crushed madly into the theatre. The play selected was 'The Minor,' and the archbishop, from some expressions it contained, sought to have it changed. His Grace of Devonshire, in writing to David Garrick on the subject, says of Dr. Secker: 'He would have authorised me to have used his name to stop "The Minor," but I got off from it, and concluded with sending a recommendation by Mr. Pelham to the author, to alter those passages that are liable to objection, his Grace would not point them out.' His Grace was a wary man; had he made any alterations, Foote, the author of the play, said he would have advertised it as 'corrected and prepared for the press by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.'

The town became as gay as in the palmy days of George II. The opera was crowded. Paganina, fat and forty, received an ovation

wherever she sang, Philip Elisi, the primo tenore, was the idol of the hour, and David Garrick and Mistress Kitty Clive played to thronged houses at old Drury Lane. There were drawing-rooms at the Court on Sundays and Thursdays, and there were vast assemblies given by the Duke of Cumberland, the Princess Amelia, the Duchesses of Norfolk and Northumberland, where all the fashionable world met, and gossipped and danced and gambled to their heart's content.

In the midst of the gaiety, the king fell in love: the object of his passion being on this occasion Lady Sarah Lennox, the great-granddaughter of the gracious, pleasure-loving Charles II., and daughter of Charles, second Duke of Richmond. Walpole, whose taste was fastidious, especially where female beauty was concerned, after seeing her acting in some amateur theatricals at Holland House, wrote of her to George Montagu: 'Lady Sarah was more beautiful than you can conceive; she was in white, with her hair about her ears and on the ground; no Magdalen by Correggio was ever half so lovely and

expressive.' This descendant of royalty was then at that most seductive period of life when girlhood blossoms into lovely womanhood, and was endowed with her full share of the hereditary beauty of her house. She was certainly the fairest ornament at the new Court, and the king quickly showed his appreciation of her graces by falling in love with her. Lady Sarah, highly flattered by the royal conquest she had made, gave him every opportunity of increasing his passion; she was frequently at the drawing-rooms of St. James's, and in the mornings was to be seen attired in a fancy costume making hay in the meadows close by Holland House, the residence of her brother-in-law, Henry Fox, when the king was sure to pass that way for his customary ride.

That the young monarch intended to place her on the throne, there can be little doubt. George Grenville says that Thomas Pitt told him, the king, at one of the royal drawing-rooms, went up to Lady Susan Strangways, the companion and confidant of Lady Sarah, and asked her in a whisper if she did not think the coronation would be a much finer sight if there was a

queen. She said, 'Yes.' He then asked her if she did not know somebody who would grace that ceremony in the properest manner. At this she was much embarrassed, thinking he meant herself, but he went on and said, 'I mean your friend, Lady Sarah Lennox. Tell her so, and let me have her answer the next drawing-room day.'

In a memoir of Henry Fox, preserved in the Holland House manuscripts, the following interesting details concerning this affair of the royal heart are set down :—

'On Thursday, Lady Susan (Strangways) was at Court with Lady Albemarle, Lady Sarah on the other side of the Room with Lady Caroline Fox. The king said to Lady Susan,

"You are going into Somersetshire; when do you return?"

'Lady Susan—"Not before Winter, Sir, and I don't know how soon in Winter."

'King—"Is there nothing will bring you to town before Winter?"

'L. S.—"I don't know of anything."

'K.—"Would you not like to see a Coronation?"

‘L. S.—“Yes, Sir, and I hope I should come to see that.”

‘K.—“I hear it’s very popular, my having put it off.”

‘L. S.—[Nothing.]

‘K.—“Won’t it be a much finer sight when there is a Queen?”

‘L. S.—“To be sure, Sir.”

‘K.—“I have had a great many applications from abroad, but I don’t like them. I have had none at home—I should like that better.”

‘L. S.—[Nothing—(frightened).]

‘K.—“What do you think of your Friend?—you know who I mean. Don’t you think Her fittest?”

‘L. S.—“Think, Sir?”

‘K.—“I think none so fit.”

‘He then went across the Room to Lady Sarah, bid Her ask Her Friend what He had been saying, and make Her tell Her, and tell Her all. She assur’d Him she would.

‘H. M. is not given to joke, and this would be a very bad joke, too. Is it serious? Strange if it is, and a strange way of going about it.

‘We are all impatient to know, and the next Sunday, or Sunday se’ennight, Lady Sarah go’s to Court out of humour, and had been crying all the morning. The moment the king saw Her He goes to Her.

‘K.—“Have you seen your Friend lately?”

‘L. S.—“Yes.”

‘K.—“Has She told you what I said to Her?”

‘L. S.—“Yes.”

‘K.—“All?”

‘L. S.—“Yes.”

‘K.—“Do you approve?”

‘L. S. made no Answer, but look’d as cross as she could look.

‘H. M., affronted, left her, seem’d confus’d; and left the Drawing-Room.’

The second extract which follows, taken also from the Holland House MSS., was sent by Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, with a letter, to his wife, Lady Caroline. It is dated April 14, 1781. It bears reference to the king’s marriage, and to an accident which the object of his admiration met whilst on her journey to Somersetshire.

‘ Tuesday.

‘ To all whom it may concern.

‘ On Sunday I heard from good Authority that the Report of H. M.’s intended Marriage with a Princess of Brunswick was entirely without foundation. And that He was totally free and unengag’d.

‘ On Monday, therefore, which was yesterday, I went to Court. I saw the Marquis of Kildare and Conolly there, to whom I thought H. M. had spoke, and probably might not speak to me concerning Lady Sal. I determin’d, however, that He should, if I could bring it about. After a Loose Question or two, he in a 3rd supposes I am by this time settled at Holland House. (Now I have you.)

“ I never go there, Sir,” says I ; “ there is nobody there.”

“ Where is Lady Caroline ?”

“ In Somersetshire with Lady Sarah.”

‘ At that name His Voice and Countenance, gentle and gracious already, softened, and He colour’d a little.

“ I am very glad to hear She is so well.”

“ As well as anybody can be with such an

Accident, but the Pain was *terrible* from the Motion of the Coach till she got to Mr. Hoare's."

'He drew up his Breath, wreath'd himself, and made a Countenance of one feeling Pain himself. (Thinks I, you shall hear of that again.) I added,

"She is extremely chearfull now, and patient and good-humour'd to a degree."

"Was She going down a Steep Hill when the Horse fell?"

"I believe not, Sir; the Horse put his foot upon a Stone, which broke, and it was impossible He should not fall. Lady Sarah, I hear," says I, "proposes to ride to London upon the same Horse, to clear the Horse from all blame."

"That shews," says He, "a good Spirit in Lady Sarah, but I trust there will be prudence in the Family to prevent it."

"I fancy," says I, "Lady Caroline will dissuade it, but indeed the Horse was not to blame. In rising again, his Shoulder press'd Lady Sarah's leg upon the Stones of which that Road is full, and broke it."

'Then came the same Countenance and Expressions of Uneasiness, which I rather increas'd

by talking again of the Pain the motion of the Coach gave; and then reliev'd by assuring him that she had nothing hard to bear now but the Confinement.

‘“I fancy,” says He, “that is not very easy to Lady Sarah.”

‘And then He left me for some conversation which neither gave him so much pain nor so much pleasure as mine had done.

‘Don’t tell Lady Sarah that I *am sure* He intends to marry her, for I am not *sure* of it. Whether Lady Sarah shall be told what I am sure of, I leave to the Reader’s Judgment. I *am sure* that He loves Her better than N. (Lord Newbottle) do’s.

‘I have shortened, not exaggerated, a Word in this account, and I don’t think it was prevention made me imagine something particular whenever he pronounced especially the last *Lady Sarah*.’

Matters had arrived at this point when the princess, ever jealous of her son, became alarmed; a future queen, chosen by her, and, therefore, placed under a life-long obligation to her, might be held under the same influence as that

which bound the king, and in this manner the princess might still be enabled to govern the kingdom; but, if Lady Sarah were placed on the throne, all such ambitious hopes must come to a speedy end. There was, therefore, no time to be lost. The princess privately despatched Colonel Graeme, as the '*Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*' state, to visit various little Protestant courts and make report of the qualifications of the several unmarried princesses. Beauty, and still less talents, were not, it is likely, the first object of his instructions. On the testimony of this man, the golden apple was given to the Princess of Mecklenburg.

But, whilst Colonel Graeme was travelling on his private mission, the princess was busy at home. She was determined to end the king's love-affair, and for this purpose called to her aid her cavalier, Lord Bute, and her eldest daughter, the Princess Augusta. A strict watch was placed on the king's movements; his mother informed him that Lady Sarah '*was a bad young woman,*' and the Princess Augusta, with right royal manners, taunted her in the drawing-room, laughed in her face, and strove to

affront her; moreover, Lady Bute had received private instructions to interrupt as far as possible all whisperings between the lovers.

Meanwhile, there were rumours abroad concerning the king's marriage. 'The private attachments of the king,' says Huish, speaking of this time, 'now became the subject of general conversation. The alarm was industriously spread throughout the country of the danger to which it was exposed from a spurious offspring of the sovereign; the extent of his amours was investigated in the most inquisitorial manner; the circumstance of his being a father was bruited about as corroborative of the pressing necessity of an immediate union with some foreign princess The pen of satire was employed to hold up to ridicule the amours of the sovereign. The most scurrilous lampoons issued daily from the corrupted press, and the dexterity which distinguished their composition could only be equalled by the eagerness with which they were bought.'

On July 7, 1761, the king's messengers were suddenly despatched to all Privy Counsellors in order to summon them to a meet-

ing to be held at one o'clock next day at St. James's, the object of which, they were told, was urgent and important business. The business, however, consisted in announcing His Majesty's intended marriage with Charlotte, daughter of Charles Louis, Duke of Mirow, the second son of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. This illustrious lady was quite unknown to those over whom she was destined to reign. 'Till that hour,' says Walpole, 'perhaps not six men in England knew such a princess existed.'

The king, like his subjects, was kept in ignorance of the arrangements which were being made for his union for a considerable time, and up to the very day of its announcement had carried on his courtship with Lady Sarah, who only heard of the alliance when it was publicly declared. Neither His Majesty, the cabinet, nor the people looked favourably on this marriage with an insignificant princess, and in the minds of the populace distrust was added to dislike by reason of the secret manner in which it was arranged. But the king was too weak, and had been too long under the control of his mother and Lord Bute, to oppose

their wishes in any way; he therefore complacently accepted the wife selected for him without a murmur, and Lord Harcourt was sent to demand the hand of this almost unheard-of princess in marriage with the King of England.

‘The handkerchief has been tossed a vast way,’ writes Horace Walpole to Horace Mann; ‘it is to a Charlotte, Princess of Mecklenburg. Lord Harcourt is to be at her father’s Court—if he can find it—on August 1, and the coronation for both their Majesties is fixed for September 22.’

Matters were thus hurried on from various reasons, one of which was given by Lord Bute in writing to the Duke of Bedford: ‘The numberless stories and insolent untruths,’ says his intriguing lordship, ‘propagated most artfully about this town have induced me to think that in accelerating the measure I was doing no unacceptable service to my king and country.’ Whether the stories and untruths which this honourable patriot refers to were anent Hannah Lightfoot or the more innocent gossip which introduced Lady Sarah Lennox’s name it is im-

possible to say. Lady Sarah was disappointed, but not heart-broken, by the project of the royal marriage, as may be judged from a letter of hers to Lady Susan Strangways yet preserved in the Holland House MSS., which throws considerable light upon her feelings. This epistle bears the date, July 7, 1761, and runs as follows :—

‘ MY DEAREST SUSAN,
‘ To begin to astonish you as much as I was, I must tell you that the king is going to be married to a princess of Mecklenburg, and that I am sure of it. There is a council to-morrow on purpose. The orders for it are *urgent* and *important* business; does not your Chollar rise at hearing this? But you think, I daresay, that I have been doing some terrible thing to deserve it, for you would [not] easily be brought to change so totally your opinion of any person, but I assure you I have not I shall take care to show I am not mortified to anybody, but, if it is true that one can vex anybody with a reserved, cold manner, he shall have it, I promise him. Now as to what

I think about it myself, excepting this little revenge, I have almost forgiven him ; luckily for me I did not love him, and only liked, nor did the title weigh anything with me. So little, at least, that my disappointment did not *affect* my spirits above one hour or two, I believe ; I did not cry, I assure you, which I believe you will, as I know you were more set upon it than I was. The thing I am most angry at is looking so like a fool, as I shall for having gone so often for nothing ; but I don't much care. If he was to change his mind again (which can't be though), and not give a *very good* reason for his conduct, I would not have him ; for if he is so weak as to be governed by everybody, I shall have but a bad time of it. Now I charge you, dear Lady Sue, not to mention this to anybody but Lord and Lady Ilchester, and desire them not to speak of it to any mortal, for it will be said we invent Storries, and he will hate us all anyway ; for one generally hates people that one is in the wrong with, and that knows one has acted wrong, particularly if they speak of it, and it might do a great deal of harm to all the rest of the family and do me no good. So pray remember this,

for a secret among many people is very bad, and I must tell it some

‘We are to act a play and have a little ball. I wish you were here to enjoy them; but they are forwarded for Ste, and to show that we are not so melancholy quite.’

Lord Harcourt discovered the Court of Mecklenburg, and found England's future queen enjoying an existence of rustic simplicity. She only dressed *en robe de chambre* on Sundays, when, after service, she was allowed to put on her best gown, and then taken for an airing in a great, rumbling coach round her brother's principality. At the time when it was proposed she should become a royal sovereign, she had never ‘dined at table.’ But one morning her eldest brother came to her accompanied by his mother; he told her to put on her best clothes, for an ambassador from the King of England had come to visit them, and she should dine with them that day for the first time. The poor little princess was delighted, and asked her mother if she should ‘put on her blue tabby and her jewellery,’ to which the elder lady made answer, ‘*Mon enfant, tu n'en as point.*’ When she

went down to the saloon, decked in her holiday finery, she saw it was more brilliantly lighted than usual, and noticed that at one end stood a table and two cushions, as if preparations had been made for a wedding. Her brother then gave her his hand, and said to the bewildered princess, '*Allons, ne faites pas l'enfant—tu vas être Reine d'Angleterre,*' when the ceremony of marriage by proxy was gone through.

Rapid preparations were then made for her journey to England, and an outfit for the royal bride was prepared, to defray the expenses of which, according to Huish, five years' income of the little principality was required. This, it may be mentioned, the English nation was made to make amends for, and, moreover, the king soon granted his impoverished brother-in-law a pension, which was duly levied on the Irish establishment.

The new queen was small and lean in person, pale and insignificant looking in appearance; her hair was dark brown, her nose flat, and her mouth extremely wide. Her manners in no way counterbalanced her want of personal attraction, and throughout her life she betrayed a selfish,

avaricious disposition, incapable of generosity or consideration for others outside her family. Along with Lord Harcourt, the Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton had been sent to conduct her to England; 'but as an earnest of the prison prepared for her,' says Walpole, 'and to keep her in that state of ignorance which was essential to the views of the princess, they were forbidden to see her alone.' The royal yacht despatched for her conveyance was, by way of delicate compliment to her, renamed the *Charlotte*, and was furnished with a harpsichord, on which, during her journey to England, she played continually, accompanying herself as she sang some dreary Calvinistic hymns, which she had been wont to chant in her isolated home.

A quaint account of her arrival is given in a little pamphlet writ by one Joseph Taylor.

'At length,' says this good man and loyal, 'after different storms, and being often in sight of the English coast, and often in danger of being driven on that of Norway, the fleet, with Her Most Serene Highness on board, arrived at Harwich on September 6th. As it was night when the fleet arrived, Her Most Serene High-

ness slept on board, and continued there till three in the afternoon of the next day, during which time her route had been settled, and instructions received as to the manner of her proceeding to St. James's. At her landing she was received by the mayor and aldermen of Harwich with their usual formalities. About five o'clock she came to Colchester, and stopped at the house of Mr. Enew, where she was received and waited upon by Mrs. Enew and Mrs. Rebow; but Captain Best attended her with coffee and Lieutenant John Seabear with tea. Being thus refreshed, she proceeded to Witham, where she arrived at a quarter-past seven, and stopped at Lord Abercorn's, and his lordship provided as elegant an entertainment for her as time would permit.

‘During the time of her supping, the door of her room was ordered to be wide open, that everybody might have the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing Her Majesty, and on each side of her chair stood the Lords Harcourt and Anson. The fruits were choice melons, figs, pears, &c., and many other sorts both in and out of season. She slept that night at his lord-

ship's house, and a little after twelve o'clock on Tuesday came to Romford, where she stopped at Mr. Dutton's, wine-merchant. The king's coach and servants met Her Majesty there, and she was by them served with coffee at his house. She stayed there till almost one o'clock, and then entered the king's coach. The attendants of Her Majesty were in three coaches; in the first were some ladies from Mecklenburg, and in the last was Her Majesty, who sat forward, and the Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton backward. Her Majesty was dressed entirely in the English taste; she wore a fly-cap, with rich lace lapets, a stomacher ornamented with diamonds, and a gold brocade suit of clothes with a white ground.

‘They proceeded at a tolerable pace, attended by an incredible number of spectators, both on horse and foot, to Stratford-le-Bow and Mile-end turnpike, where they turned up Dog-Row, and prosecuted their journey to Hackney turnpike, then by Shoreditch Church and up Old Street to City Road, across Islington, along the New Road into Hyde Park, down Constitution Hill into St. James's Park, and then to the gar-

den gate of the palace, where Her Majesty was handed out of her coach by the Duke of Devonshire (as Lord Chamberlain) to the gate, where she was received by His Royal Highness the Duke of York. As Her Majesty alighted from her coach, His Majesty descended the steps from the palace into the garden, and they met each other half-way; and, as Her Majesty was going to pay her obeisance, the king took hold of her hand, raised her up, saluted it, and then led her upstairs.'

At this meeting, Galt says, 'an involuntary expression of the king's countenance revealed what was passing within, but it was a passing cloud.'

All the town had been in a state of excitement and expectancy for three days previous to her arrival; messengers had reached London from Harwich announcing that she had arrived, meaning in the Harwich road, which was at once translated into landing. This news added fresh zest to the general bustle; the courtiers held discussions on precedence, and talked of nothing but processions, the City made great preparations for the entry, the bridesmaids, ten

in number, were waiting with impatience, the guns were loaded, and the New Road and parks were filled with citizens anxious to catch sight of their future queen.

At last her diminutive majesty came, looking very plain and rather comical, arrayed in the finery of her fly-cap and lace lappets, and pale with fatigue and anxiety.

'Ah! my dear duchess,' she said, plaintively, to her Grace of Hamilton, who had smiled when she saw that the little lady trembled, 'you may laugh, you have been married twice, but it is no joke to me.'

Then the cannon roared from St. James's and the Tower, and the mob cheered lustily, and in the City were vast rejoicings.

The king and his consort dined with all the royal family, and afterwards their gracious majesties were so good as to show themselves in the gallery and other apartments fronting the park to the people, who cheered them with great heartiness.

At nine o'clock the marriage procession began to move towards the chapel, the bride being conducted by the king's brothers, the Duke of

York and Prince William, and preceded by one hundred and twenty ladies in extreme rich dresses. She was attired in a nuptial habit of white and silver, 'an endless mantle of violet-coloured velvet, lined with ermine, and attempted to be fastened on her shoulder by a huge bunch of large pearls, dragged itself and almost the rest of her clothes half-way down her waist,' says Horace Walpole, who was present at the brilliant ceremony. 'On her head was a beautiful little tiara of diamonds; a diamond necklace, and a stomacher of diamonds, worth three-score thousand pounds, which she is to wear at the coronation too.' Her bridesmaids were the daughters of six dukes, and her train was supported by the daughters of six earls.

The king's uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, gave the bride away, and the ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the conclusion of which the guns roared once more from St. James's and the Tower, as a signal to the people that their king was wed. Then these two who had been made one, sat at the right side of the altar under a canopy, the

bridesmaids grouped around the bride, 'all dressed alike in white lute-string with silver trimmings, with pearls, diamonds, &c.; a dress that attracted the eyes of everyone.' Opposite them sat the Princess Dowager of Wales in a chair of state, the rest of the royal family on stools, and 'the quality on benches, which consisted of all the foreign ministers, including Monsieur Bussy, all the peers and peeresses of the kingdom, together with the bishops.'

At night the cities of London and Westminster were brilliantly lighted; bands played right merrily; and vast crowds of people filled the streets. During the illuminations several persons, according to *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 'had their clothes very much burnt by having squibs and serpents put into their pockets, sleeves of their coats, &c.; particularly near Charing Cross, where a woman was so much burnt and terrified as to be carried away almost dead.'

Addresses, all more or less notable for their ponderous phrases, abject expressions, and flights of fancy when the royal personages were referred to, poured in on the sovereign and his gracious spouse. The Lord Mayor, bluff alder-

men, and Common Council of the City, the latter arrayed in all the finery of new mazarine lined with fur, and wearing full-bottomed wigs, majestic to behold, informed the king they ‘adored the divine goodness that, as in all your majesty’s other conduct, so more particularly in a choice of the highest importance to your majesty and your kingdoms, hath so visibly guided and inspired your royal breast.’ These wise gentlemen referred to the queen, of whom they knew nothing whatsoever, ‘as a princess of most exalted merit, a princess who, by her descent from an illustrious lineage (respectable for their firm and constant zeal for the Protestant religion), was most worthy to engage your majesty’s esteem and affection, and to share the honours of the British crown.’

The most amusing of these stilted compositions was the humble address of the ladies of the borough of St. Albans to the queen’s most excellent majesty. ‘Formed by Nature,’ said these daughters of Eve to their sovereign lady, ‘and improved by the completest education, you were selected by the best of kings to add the only happiness that was wanting in this world.’

What follows this eloquence is much more to the purpose, and shows that the ladies of the borough of St. Albans had homely wit.

‘As subjects,’ said these wise virgins, ‘are greatly influenced by the example of their sovereign, we have the strongest reason to hope that the matrimonial state will be duly honoured by your Majesty’s dutiful subjects chearfully following the royal example; an example too much wanted in this degenerate age, wherein that happy state is made the object of ridicule instead of respect by too many of vain, giddy, and dissipated minds. If the riches of a nation consist in its populousness, this happy country will in that respect *too soon* become poor, whilst the lawful means to continue posterity are either shackled by the restraint of mistaken laws, or despised by those who regard *none*.’

The day after the royal marriage, there was the most brilliant drawing-room held at St. James’s ‘ever known to the memory of man:’ when the Spanish, Dutch, Tripolitan, and Morocco ambassadors attended in gorgeous apparel procured specially for the occasion. The great suite of apartments opening from one to

another were crowded with men and women of the highest rank in the nation, all arrayed in the bravery of new clothes; the ladies bejewelled and bewigged, with patches upon cheek and chin, enormous head-dresses piled high with false hair, decked with many ornaments, and surmounted with plumes of ostrich feathers; the men in square-cut velvet or satin coats of brilliant hues, the skirts distended with wire and buckram; with satin waistcoats, glittering with gold embroidery, deep of pocket and wide of gap; and high-drawn silk stockings, amber, crimson, or blue. Moreover, for their further adornment they wore rich point-lace cravats and ruffles, diamond-hilted swords, and carried lace-bordered, perfumed handkerchiefs in hands that were radiant with jewels.

The sight of so much splendour awes Her Majesty, who stares at the goodly show that passes before her, waving its painted fans, fluttering its delicate ruffles, courtesying with inexpressible grace, smiling as if radiant with the happiness of heaven, whispering elaborately-turned compliments, bandying phrases gemmed with sparkling wit, and detailing the latest

scandal with an air of sweetness that would have become the utterance of a prayer. She speaks to none of these, for her knowledge of English is scant indeed, and her French but tolerable; but instead of words she gives her courtiers many smiles, which evidences of amiability are ridiculed by some of the worthy ladies, who declare 'her face is all mouth when she laughs,' and who titter behind their fans when she gives one of those sudden little ducks which do duty for a courtesy.

The king to-day has lost all traces of his habitual sullen aspect, his florid face beams with smiles, his round, blue eyes are bright, his manner unusually unrestrained and agreeable. Near him stands Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond, who is young, singularly handsome, and as gallant as his fair admirers could desire; close by is another courtier, a rival of his Grace's, and, like him, descended from the royal Stuart line, Augustus Henry, the young Duke of Grafton, who is without the graceful bearing or comely looks of his more favoured kinsman. Lady Sarah Lennox is the most beautiful amongst that stately throng, and many eyes are

critically turned from her to the colourless face of the queen, whom one good courtier declares is possessed of 'an elegant plainness.' Old Lady Exeter stands near Her Majesty, and bluntly informs the king 'he is the handsomest man she ever saw,' upon which he laughs, being greatly pleased, and the queen looks puzzled, until the flattering words are repeated to her in guttural German, when she indulges in one of those smiles that render her mouth like a cavern. The handsome Duchess of Hamilton and Argyll, once the penniless Maria Gunning, who was married with a bed-curtain ring, at half an hour after twelve at night, at Mayfair Chapel, and who became successively the wife of two dukes and the mother of four, is there laughing at a droll story which George Townshend tells her : for he has a reputation for wit, and is a mimic of uncommon ability, whose favourite butt is the old Duke of Cumberland.

Not far removed from her Grace is a man whom she detests, though she differs in this from many of her sex, to the injury of their good names ; this is my Lord Talbot, who is now Lord Steward of the Household, a man of

some parts, and of fashion, as may be inferred from the fact that a certain duchess had been divorced for his sweet sake from her lawful lord and master. My lord, who has the reputation of being a man who loves gold greatly, is a favourite with the king, who has been exceedingly gracious to him to-day—a fact which the Duchess of Bedford remarks to George Selwyn, courtier and wit. ‘Yes,’ replies Selwyn, ‘His Majesty’s condescension is so great, he takes notice of the meanest of his subjects.’ Then he tells her Grace, with a slow and solemn air, as if he were imparting a state secret, that the brusque Lady Northumberland has been appointed one of the ladies of the bed-chamber, because, as Her Majesty knew no English, her ladyship had undertaken to teach her the *vulgar* tongue.

Two of the royal bridesmaids stand by the queen, both young and beautiful, Lady Harriet Bentinck and Lady Caroline Russell, and by them my Lord Errol, whose stout person is dressed in tissue that makes him look like one of the giants in Guildhall new gilt. The old Duke of Newcastle, shrivelled-looking and gouty and restless, hurries from one group to

another, smiling on all; a man 'not without parts,' says Lord March, with a cynical smile. 'Certainly not,' answers one of the wits who overheard him; 'he has done without them for forty years.' Amongst the vast throng is Lady Kildare, famous for her beauty, and the charming Lady Sutherland, and many other fair women and gallant men, loyal courtiers all.

But this Drawing-Room, the centre of so much splendour, did not pass without a ridiculous incident to mark it. The accident referred to happened to Bubb Dodington, a special friend of the princess dowager, an ambitious courtier, and a rare fop. He had come to the Drawing-Room, and approached to kiss Her Majesty's hand, as Cumberland says, 'decked in an embroidered suit of silk, with lilac waistcoat and breeches, the latter of which, in the act of kneeling down, forgot their duty, and broke loose from their moorings in a very indecorous and uncourtly manner.'

During the remainder of the week, my Lords Newcastle and Talbot and Mr. Pitt gave entertainments, as befitted loyal gentlemen rejoicing with their sovereign lord. One night in this

gleeful time was devoted to the drama; the king and queen went to Drury Lane play-house to see David Garrick perform in the rehearsal, which had been writ, in the days when the second Charles reigned as king, by the reckless, graceless George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, a man of great parts and infinite wit. Their majesties were carried in chairs, the king being preceded by the Duke of Devonshire, his lord chamberlain; and the Hon. Mr. Finch, vice-chamberlain; Her Majesty by her lord chamberlain, his Grace of Manchester; my Lord Cantalup, her vice-chamberlain; my Lord Harcourt, her master of the horse; and likewise by the Duchess of Ancaster and the Countess of Effingham. Then came the royal family in coaches, the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, attended by the Horse Guards, and a mighty fine procession it made. The people were all abroad to see it, and lined the streets from St. James's to Drury Lane, crushing, surging, and striving to catch a sight of the plain little woman, decked out in brocade and a vast number of diamonds, who sat quietly in her chair, and looked frightened at so great a crowd that dou-

bled the number of her brother's subjects. Round the play-house the throng was prodigious; a few minutes after the doors were opened, every part of the theatre was full. Never was there so brilliant a house. In all the boxes were the ladies of the Court, dressed in the clothes and decked with the jewels they wore at the royal wedding; the gentlemen who accompanied them being likewise apparelled in much finery.

Outside was quite a different scene. The crowd increased every moment; thousands were disappointed at not being able to get inside the theatre, and all was bustle and excitement; several gentlewomen who attempted an entrance had their cloaks, caps, aprons, and handkerchiefs torn from them, and many gallants had the bags of their wigs, their swords, and money stolen. Some of the people were thrown down, the chairmen were hustled about, a girl was killed, and a man trampled upon.

However, all these sights and celebrations were but preliminaries to the grand ceremony of the coronation. Great preparations were made for the event; galleries were erected in Westminster Hall and in the abbey, and a plat-

form was erected from the upper end of the hall, where the procession was to commence, and continued through New Palace Yard, Parliament Street, and Bridge Street, into King Street, and on to the west door of the abbey and the choir, where the coronation was to take place.

About eleven o'clock, on September 22, the procession started, headed by the king's herb-woman, with her six maids, strewing the way with sweet herbs, followed by the dean's beadle of Westminster, with a mighty staff in his hand, and the high constable of Westminster, his person arrayed in the great glory of a scarlet cloak. Then came fifes, drums, and trumpeters; six wise clerks in chancery, in gowns of black, and with silk loops and tufts upon the sleeves; the king's chaplains, four abreast, all goodly men and meek; the two Sheriffs of London, the Recorder, thirteen aldermen in their gowns, with caps in their hands; the king's attorney, and his ancient sergeant, looking mighty grave; the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, barons of the Exchequer, justices of both benches in scarlet robes; the Chief Baron, with his great gold collar; the choristers

of the abbey in surplices; the sergeant of the vestry and sergeant porter in scarlet gowns, clad likewise with an air of vast importance; the children of the Chapel Royal in surplices, with scarlet mantles over them; the choir of Westminster, with their music-books; the organ-blower and groom of the vestry; gentlemen of the Chapel Royal in scarlet mantles; the sub-dean, in a scarlet gown turned up with black velvet; the prebendaries of Westminster in surplices and capes, with their caps in their hands; the master of the jewel-house and his officers all; the Bath king-of-arms, in the habit of his order, carrying his coronet in his hand. Then came a vast throng of baronesses, barons, bishops, viscountesses, viscounts, countesses and earls, marchionesses and marquesses, duchesses and dukes, all presenting a magnificent spectacle, arrayed in the gorgeous coloured robes of state, and adorned with the magnificent badges of their various orders.

After them followed my Lord Chancellor, bearing the purse, and my Lord Archbishop of Canterbury in his rochet, attended by two gentlemen of the Privy Chamber in crimson velvet mantles

lined with white silk, faced with miniver and powdered with ermine ; then the queen's chamberlain, and his Grace of Bolton, bearing her crown ; and finally Her Majesty in proper person, in her royal robes, on her head a circlet of gold adorned with jewels, walking demurely under a canopy of cloth of gold, borne by sixteen barons of the Cinque Ports, her train supported by Her Royal Highness the Princess Augusta, and at either side of her their spiritual lordships of London and Lincoln. Then came the king's regalia, the Lord Great Chamberlain of England bearing the white staff, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of York, and finally the king, under a great canopy of gold, his train supported by six lords, eldest sons of peers.

Never was such a glorious sight seen before. In all the streets through which the brilliant procession moved, balconies had been erected on either side, which were hung with gay flags, brocaded cloths, and tapestry, and were filled with a vast concourse of people ; banners waved, crowds cheered, and the sound of trumpets and drums, bravely discoursing processional music, was almost drowned by the jangle of bells that

rang out from every steeple, tower, and turret.

Amongst those peers and peeresses, decked out in all the finery of pomp and state, were some men and women on whom the crowd looked down from balcony, window, and roof with interest and admiration. There was my Lord Errol,—whose unhappy father, Lord Kilmarnock, had but a few years ago been condemned to the block in this hall, the scene of the coronation,—figuring as the high constable of Scotland, and looking as loyal a man as any ; and close by him my Lord Effingham, who had that morning owned to the king that the Earl Marshal's office had been neglected in some of the details of ceremony, but assured His Majesty he had taken such care for the future that the next coronation would be regulated in the most exact manner imaginable. My Lady Harrington was there, covered with all the diamonds she could borrow, hire, or seize, and looked extremely fine. She had complained a few days before that the herald had ordered her to walk with Lady Portsmouth, who would have a wig and a stick. ‘Pho,’ said George Selwyn, to whom she had told her grievance,

‘you will only look as if you were taken up by the constable.’

She was not, however, the only peeress who was dissatisfied with the partner assigned her for the procession. Lady Cowper proudly refused to walk with my Lady Macclesfield, because she was ‘a common woman’ (heaven help us) whom her lord was mad enough to marry; but, when she was forced to obey the herald’s orders, the haughty countess set out at a round trot, and kept ahead of her companion all the way. The old Duchess of Queensberry, kind-hearted and mad—the friend of Gay and Swift, both of whom had now passed into silence and shadow-land—was in the procession, erect and with locks white as snow, feeling anxious to whisper to those around her, whenever opportunity offered, that her Grace of Bedford was so painted ‘she looked like an orange-peach, half red, half yellow.’ My Lady Suffolk, the mistress of George II., was likewise present, and old Lady Westmoreland, full of years and dignity; and so was my Lady Exeter, who was also venerable.

When the great coronation show had tra-

versed the prescribed route, it returned to the abbey, where, after some ceremonies, the Archbishop of Canterbury set the crown on His Majesty's head; on which the peers put on their coronets, the Dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine their hats, the bishops, Knights of the Bath, and judges their caps, and the Kings-of-Arms their crowns. Then the *Te Deum* was sung; the spiritual lords paid homage to the king, and the lords temporal likewise, each peer taking off his coronet, touching the king's crown and kissing his cheek, and medals of their Sacred Majesties were thrown about by the Treasurer of the Household; so also was the queen crowned, and there was much rejoicing.

After the coronation, their Majesties entered into the Court of Wards, until the great banquet in Westminster Hall was ready. This was not until evening, and when the king arrived he found the place all in darkness, its illumination being reserved for his entry as a compliment.

'Conceive to yourself,' says a correspondent, writing of the banquet, 'if you can conceive, what I own I am at a loss to describe, so magnificent a building as that of Westminster Hall

lighted up with near three thousand wax candles in most splendid branches; our crowned heads and almost the whole nobility, with the prime of our gentry, most superbly arrayed, and adorned with a profusion of the most brilliant jewels; the galleries on every side crowded with company, for the most part elegantly and richly dressed.'

When the first course had been served at the royal table, it was the duty of Earl Talbot, as Lord High Steward of the Household, to ride to the steps leading to where the king and queen sat, and, after bowing to them, to retire. My lord was determined to make a fine figure on the occasion, and had trained his horse to back out of the hall when returning; but, alas! for the vanity of human desires, to his great chagrin and the amusement of those assembled, when this bold earl would have ridden into the presence of royalty face foremost, his horse was of another mind, and came into the hall and to the foot of the daïs with his tail turned to royalty. When this goodly show was over, in came the champion between the High Constable and Earl Marshal, followed by

four pages and preceded by the herald, and out spake he.

‘If any person, of what degree soever, high or low, shall deny or gainsay our sovereign lord, King George III., King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, grandson and next heir to our sovereign lord, King George II., the last king deceased, to be right heir to the Imperial Crown of the realm of Great Britain; or that he ought not to enjoy the same; here is his champion, who saith that he lyeth, and is a false traytor; being ready in person to combat with him, and in the quarrel will adventure his life against him, on what day soever he shall be appointed.’

Then the gauntlet was dashed down with proud defiance, and was ultimately picked up by one of the pages. A gilt bowl of wine, with a cover, was then brought to the king, when he drank deep to the champion brave, and subsequently sent it to him that he might have the honour of drinking from it likewise.

After this the banquet continued, and all was merry, save perhaps those who looked on from

the galleries, where they had sat for hours, and had, meanwhile, developed appetites.

‘It was pleasant,’ says James Heming, in a letter to the *Annual Register*, ‘to see the various stratagems made use of in the galleries, to come in for a snack of the good things below. The ladies clubbed their handkerchiefs, to be tied together, to draw up a chicken or bottle of wine. Some had been so provident as to bring baskets with them, which were let down, like the prisoners’ boxes at Ludgate or the Gate House, with a *pray remember the poor*.’

There, amongst these gay and hungry ladies, sat Charles Edward Stuart, whose legal right it was to sit upon the English throne. Lord Marschal told the historian Hume that the young Pretender, as he was called, was present at the scene.

‘I asked my lord the reason for this strange fact,’ says Hume.

‘Why,’ says he, ‘a gentleman told me who saw him there, and whispered in his ear, “Your Royal Highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here.”’

“It was curiosity that led me,” said the

other. "But, I assure you," added he, "that the person who is the cause of all this pomp and magnificence is the man I envy the least."

Before the day was done, an incident happened which was regarded with fear by those who believed in omens. The great diamond fell from the king's crown as he was returning to Westminster Hall. When, twenty-one years later, the North American colonies gained their independence, many persons remembered the accident which had befallen the regalia on the coronation day.

CHAPTER III.

‘The Witch’ and the Earl—How the new Reign was Disturbed—Pitt and Peace—Popular Feeling—The King ridiculed by the Mob—The Scotch Favourite—Public Demonstrations—What the Pamphlets and Ballads said—Caricatures of the Day—The Royal Prorogation—Wholesale Bribery—Triumph and Vengeance—The Toast to Wit, Beauty, Virtue, and Honour—Lord Bute Resigns.

AT the beginning of this reign, the public looked forward with some apprehension to the power which the Princess Dowager of Wales—commonly known as ‘the Witch’—and Lord Bute were well known to hold over the young monarch. ‘What could be expected,’ says Walpole, ‘from a boy’ (the king) ‘locked up from the converse of mankind, governed by a mother still more retired, who was under the influence of a man that had passed his life in solitude, and was too haughty to admit to his

familiarity but half a dozen silly authors and flatterers ?’

Both the princess and the earl were, however, too wily to give any direct indication of their power within the first half year of the new reign. All things ministerial, remained much as they had been through the last years of the reign of his late Majesty of blessed memory, a matter which occasioned some wonder.

‘After all,’ said Horace Walpole, raising his eyebrows to an expression of melancholy cynicism, ‘there is nothing new under the sun.’

‘No,’ replied George Selwyn, the fine beau and excellent wit, ‘nor under the grandson either.’

However, when the king had been proclaimed about six months, the dowager and the earl made their premier move upon the political chess-board, the result being that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Legg, was suddenly dismissed, and Lord Holderness was ordered to give up the seals of Secretary of State, which were immediately delivered by the royal puppet to Lord Bute, the evil genius of his life. Legg had, in the late reign, refused to support

a follower of the favourites at a Hampshire election, therefore proving himself worthy of all humiliation and punishment in the eyes of the young sovereign. His downfall was not a surprise; Lord Holderness's dismissal, however, was unexpected.

These steps were taken without consulting Pitt, the great minister, who, though naturally indignant, thought it best to take no notice of the slight for the present. Parliament was dissolved in March, 1761, and, when it again assembled, Lord Bute, who had now become a minister, gave some indications of his future course in a more open manner than he had yet ventured to adopt.

The Whigs, under the powerful leadership of Pitt, had become popular by a long war, which, crowned with success and fortune, had raised England to a pre-eminence over every other nation in Europe. France was, by repeated losses of her colonies, reduced to despair; in America she had been rifled of Quebec, in Africa her chief settlements fell, in the East Indies her power was abridged; her navy was almost annihilated, her commerce reduced to

ruin, and she was therefore ready to grant whatever concessions this country might require. It was therefore plainly at the option of England to extend her victories and acquisitions still further. The country was in this situation when the king read his first speech to his Council, who were struck with astonishment to hear him refer to a war which had captivated the whole country as 'bloody and expensive,' and of his hopes 'of obtaining an honourable and lasting peace.'

Humiliated and indignant, Mr. Pitt, on the evening of its delivery, waited on Lord Bute, and, after a stormy argument which lasted for three hours, prevailed on him that in the printed copy of the royal speech the words should be changed to 'an expensive but necessary war,' and that after the words 'honourable peace' should be inserted, 'in consort with our allies.' The inclination for peace which the king's speech indicated gave sudden and unexpected hopes to France; its ministers, feeling the pulse of the Court, soon opened a negotiation with the government, and, believing they could make easy terms with Bute, sued for peace. Pitt,

however, demanded greater concessions than they seemed willing to make, and refused peace on any other terms than his own. It was subsequently proved that he was judicious in his demands, and that France, under a plea of negotiating for peace, was in reality secretly forming an alliance with Spain, in order to gain that country's assistance in her war with England. This treaty between these powers was signed in August, 1761.

Pitt, having been secretly made aware of this treachery, and having also been informed of the preparations that were going on in Spain, proposed to recall the English ambassador from Madrid unless satisfactory explanations were given by the Spanish government, and to issue an immediate declaration of war on that country; but he who had formerly led, now found his advice was rejected on the plea of temporizing; that his power in the ministry had been undermined; and that factions which had been happily extinguished during the latter part of the late reign, in a desire for common weal, had now sprung to life again at the instigation of the king's favourite. He therefore declared he

would not be responsible for measures not his own, and on October 16th resigned his office. This was what Lord Bute exactly desired.

‘It is difficult to say which exulted most on the occasion, France, Spain, or Lord Bute ; for Mr. Pitt was the common enemy of all three,’ writes Horace Walpole.

The resignation of its favourite caused the whole nation a surprise which, after the first shock, quickly turned to indignation. The City of London proposed to address the king, in order to know why the minister had been dismissed ; but desisted on being told His Majesty would reply, Mr. Pitt had of his own will seceded from the cabinet. A general mourning was then proposed, but this extravagance was likewise abandoned. Meanwhile the princess dowager, who took an active part in all that was passing, but whose policy it was to be felt rather than seen, urged the king to press upon the statesman some reward for his past services, by the acceptance of which his popularity might, it was hoped, be at once blasted. His Majesty therefore offered him the government of Canada, a

peerage, or a large pension. He accepted a peerage for his wife, and a pension of three thousand a year for himself, a notice of which was immediately published in the *Gazette*.

This announcement was quickly followed by a series of attacks on the great statesman from Lord Bute and his faction. Newspapers, ballads, pamphlets, and caricatures were numerous distributed all over the town, in which Pitt was depicted, spoken, and sung of as the 'Demon of War,' who was anxious to embroil his country in a bloody struggle to gratify his love for carnage. Capital was of course made out of his acceptance of a pension. He had sold his country for gold, they said.

Incensed by the gross abuse so plentifully heaped upon him, Pitt wrote a letter to the people, explaining the cause of his resignation. This epistle, which was really an appeal to the city against the Court, had the effect of raising him still higher in popular estimation. The Common Council gave him a vote of thanks, and the city members were instructed to look to him as their recognized leader. Stirling,

Exeter, York, Chester, and other towns and cities throughout England and Scotland, complimented him on his conduct; and the tide of censure with which his enemies had striven to overwhelm him was now turned back upon themselves, and threatened to ruin them.

Public wrath was excited, and was not to be appeased until it had given full expression to its sentiments. 'The city was all fire and flame.' Not only the princess and Lord Bute were spoken of in the freest manner, but even the sacred person of the king was ridiculed. Once, when he was on his way to visit the princess, the mob gathered round his chair, and asked him if he were going to imbibe refreshment at the maternal breast, using one brief and graphic word to express the operation; and on the walls of the Royal Exchange and Westminster Hall, notices were pasted, containing the words, 'No petticoat government. No Scotch favourite.'

But the king was heedless of such signs of the times, and regarded my lord with almost as much affection as the dowager did. Ample proofs remain of the Thane's great personal

influence over His Majesty. The Countess Temple, in writing to her lord, in December, 1762, says,

‘Mrs. Ryde was here yesterday. She is acquainted with a brother of one of the Yeomen of the Guard; and he tells her the king cannot live without my Lord Bute. If he goes out anywhere, he stops when he comes back, to ask of the Yeomen of the Guard if my Lord Bute is come in yet, and that his lords, or people that are with him, look as mad as can be at it. The mob have a good story of the Duke of Devonshire. That he went first to light the king, and the king followed, leaning upon Lord Bute’s shoulder, upon which the duke turned about, and desired to know which he was waiting upon.’

Nor was Lord Bute without using the influence for his own benefit. The rangership of Richmond Park had been taken from the king’s aunt, the Princess Amelia, that it might be given to him; and, in September, 1762, he had been, with great ceremony and splendour, invested with the Order of the Garter; on which occasion the famous John Wilkes

wrote a ballad, that enjoyed an immense popularity, thrée verses of which can only be given.

THE THANE OF BUTE.

Installed Knight of the Garter, September, 1762.

‘ You may sing of Will Pitt or my Lord Albemarle,
You may toast your old friend or your favourite girl,
But my theme all your praises will equally suit,
And who should it be but John, Earl of Bute?

Derry down.

‘ With manners unformed, and with language uncouth,
The rude north he deserted, to polish the south ;
His loved bag-pipes he left, and began on his flute,
And a princess soon yielded to John, Earl of Bute.

Derry down.

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‘ The king gives but one, like his countryman, Chartres.
All England to hang him, would part with both garters.
And, good lord ! how the people would laugh and would
hoot,

Could they once set a-swinging this John, Earl of Bute.

Derry down.

The ‘Petticoat Government’ of course referred to the princess dowager, who now came in for a very fair share of the public detestation which from this time continued to her death. When at this period of popular excitement, she visited the theatre, she was greeted with a storm of hisses, and throughout the night vile innuendoes, and open references to her Scotch

lover were shouted from the galleries, which so exasperated her that she resolved never to venture within the walls of the play-house again. But the scandal which attended her name was by no means allowed to rest with the references of the unholy gods; the ballads, pamphlets, and prints of the day teemed with gross insinuations. One print, which gained a special popularity, represented her as reproving one of her maids-of-honour—Miss Chudleigh, to wit—for her erratic conduct, to which the gay young lady is made to reply, ‘Madam, *chacun à son*—But?’

Those who regarded the dropping of the great diamond from the royal crown on the coronation day as an ill-omen, now declared it was fulfilled in Pitt’s loss to the government, and the following lines were freely circulated :

‘ When first portentous it was known
Great George had jostled from his crown
The greatest diamond there ;

‘ The omen-mongers one and all
Foretold some mischief must befall,
Some loss beyond compare.

‘ Some fear this gem is Hanover,
Whilst others wish to God it were ;
Each strives the nail to hit.

‘ One guesses that, another this,
All mighty wise, yet all amiss,
For, ah ! who thought of Pitt ?’

Other lines on the same subject, written by a gentleman in the country, appeared in the daily papers.

‘ The fatal omen is fulfilled too soon,
See Pitt, the brightest pearl of the crown,
The state’s great bulwark and a nation’s pride,
Untimely severed from his sovereign’s side.
O soon may Heaven the precious gem restore
To shine unclouded and to fall no more.’

But the popular enthusiasm for the favourite and prejudice against Bute were more fully expressed on November 9th, at the annual state dinner at the Guildhall, to which the king and his consort and the ministers were duly bidden, and of which a graphic account is given in the memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham, and in those of his contemporaries. On the evening of the great banquet, the thoroughfares leading from the West End to the City were thronged by an anxious and turbulent mob, whose feelings were raised to a fever pitch of excitement. Lord Bute had some apprehensions for his safety, and, being wise in his generation, had taken

care to hire a number of butchers and prize-fighters, who had directions to follow his coach, and, in case of attack, to strike out and protect him from all violence. The fates, however, favoured him, and his coach passed through the vastly crowded streets unrecognised by the throng that impatiently awaited him, until he had almost reached the Guildhall. Then, when its prey had almost escaped it, the mob discovered him, and, rendered all the more furious because he had been suffered through mistake to pass in peace, set up a fierce howl of derision and hatred. Men, and women, ever the most demonstrative patriots, stormed round the coach, and amongst savage hisses, shouts, and yells, greeted my lord with such personal remarks as, ‘We want no Scotch rogues,’ ‘Damn you, Bute,’ ‘Pitt for ever!’ Mud was freely flung, not only on the coachman and footmen, but on the earl and on Lord Barrington, who accompanied him. In vain the bruisers and butchers, who fought right boldly, strove to protect him; they were overpowered by numbers; the coach stood still, the servants trembled for their lives, but, just as the traces were cut in order to remove the

horses, a force of constables bore down upon the mob, and after awhile succeeded in snatching the unpopular earl from its grasp.

Scarcely was this scene over, when Pitt, accompanied by Lord Temple, his brother-in-law, who had resigned at the same time as the favourite, drove up in a chariot and pair. His appearance was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm; the crowd pressed forward and kissed the heads of the horses, cheered lustily, flung their hats in the air, and gave him every demonstration of their favour. Almost immediately after him came His Sacred Majesty, looking pale and anxious, his homely little queen beside him, but the crowd had felt little loyalty to a king who allowed himself to be governed by two persons against whom the tide of popular hatred had set, and 'were quite exasperated,' as the Rev. William Robertson says, in courtly language, 'at the queen not being handsome.' So their majesties' subjects suffered them to pass almost without recognition, and scarce a cheer broke the silence that marked their reception. In the Guildhall, the king was received in like manner, hardly a murmur of applause

running round the room at his appearance, whilst the great statesman had been welcomed with noisy acclamation.

These signs of public feeling, exhibited at the Guildhall dinner were but the preliminary to a storm, which, gaining strength with time, burst in full force above the head of the favourite, and even threatened the safety of his royal master. Three months after Pitt's resignation—a period of which Spain had availed herself to rally all her strength—the government was obliged to declare war, notwithstanding the dislike which the king and Lord Bute had to such an act. Not long afterwards, the Duke of Newcastle, the nominal head of the administration, having been frequently slighted by the king, His Majesty being anxious to get rid of him, resigned his office, which was on the same day filled by Lord Bute, who then became First Lord of the Treasury, and the most unpopular minister who had ever directed the destinies of the English nation. He had at last reached the step which he had long coveted, and now resolved to use his power for the benefit of himself, his family,

and his countrymen. His daughter and Lady Susan Stuart, daughter to the Earl of Gallo-way, had been already made ladies of the bed-chamber to the king's eldest sister, the Princess Augusta. Lord Bute had also settled a royal pension of £400 a year on his sister, Lady Susan Ruren; but now he conferred the highest offices in Scotland on his brother, James MacKenzie, and obtained an English peerage for his son.

Dr. Nichol, one of the king's physicians, a very able man, was, without being guilty of any fault, removed to make room for Dr. Duncan, whose recommendation was, that he hailed from the land of cakes and ale. When the king sat for his portrait, Sir Joshua Reynolds, then in the full enjoyment of his fame, was overlooked, and Ramsay, the son of the Edinburgh wig-maker and poet, selected as the artist.

So also, when a musician was required for the queen, Dr. Arne's existence was ignored, and a Scotchman named Oswald, a retailer of second-hand music, who dwelt in the savoury district of St. Martin's Churchyard, received the appointment. Every place in the

Court was, if possible, filled by the favourite with his countrymen and countrywomen. 'The Jacobites all flock to St. James's,' said George Selwyn, 'because there are so many Stuarts there.' Another wit, William Stanhope, my Lord Chesterfield's brother, said he was afraid of going to Court, fearing he might get the itch, and then he would have to go to the princess dowager to get some sulphur to cure him.

Since the rebellion in Scotland, in 1745, the Scotch, never in favour with the English, were in especially bad odour, and the patronage shown them was deeply resented. Pamphlets, caricatures, scurrilous and bitter ballads swarmed from the press and stung, and passed from garret to drawing-room, from club to coffee house, attacking the favourite and his friends in the plainest and, oftentimes, the coarsest language. One favourite verse was :

' Had paving London streets in taste
Been left to me alone,
On Scotchmen's heads we might have trod ;
And Bute's the corner-stone.'

Nor was my lord left to suffer in single pain-

fulness. The princess dowager's name continued to be infamously and frequently coupled with his. In one of the early numbers of the *North Briton*, a paper was published on the 'Loves of Queen Isabella and Mortimer,' which left not a shadow of doubt regarding the modern characters to which it pointed in most contemptuous language. The connection of the princess and the favourite was, however, even more openly referred to when Mr. Calvert rose in the House of Commons, and drew a picture of a fictitious family in Surrey, whom he called the 'Steadys,' describing in language not to be mistaken the two old Steadys, and the young one; giving an account of young Steady's mother, and of her improper intimacy with a Scotch gardener, and concluding by expressing his hope that the true friends of young Steady would advise him to recall his old friends, and turn away the Scotch gardener.

The mob seized hold of what may be called the popular scandal, and one night a great concourse of people marched through the streets, carrying a miniature gallows, from which was

suspended a Jack-boot (indicating John Bute), and a woman's petticoat, by way of representing the princess dowager, both of which articles they publicly burned amidst great rejoicing. Nor was the king spared in the general ridicule. In *The World as it Goes* the author describes a vision of a child in a cave, carefully guarded by the royal favourite. The bard says of His Majesty :

' Altho' a child, he like a man was dress'd
 In velvet mantle, and in ermin'd vest ;
 His baby hand a golden sceptre bore,
 And on his brow a tott'ring crown he wore.
 Changeful he seem'd, and languid, and cried by turns ;
 Now with sullen fits, and now with fury burns.
 For other toys his watchful guardian teas'd,
 With the new bawbles for a moment pleas'd ;
 Then threw them at his feet, and with disdain
 Demands to leave the cave, and call his train—
 When straight the stern Protector from his vest
 Drew forth a scourge, and thus the boy address'd :
 " Behold this dreadful symbol of command,
 To me entrusted by thy mother's hand !
 Weav'd by her cunning art, and well design'd
 To rule thy tetchy mood and stubborn mind."
 Deep sunk the threats into the urchin's breast,
 Who moan'd, and sobb'd, and cry'd himself to rest.'

The caricatures which were exposed in the windows of the print-sellers all over the town equalled the ballads and pamphlets in their

open scurrility. One of these represented the high-roads from the north crowded with ragged, hungry-looking Scotchmen, forsaking their own country to find refuge in the south, whilst ship-loads sought the land of promise by sea; another entitled 'The Royal Dupe,' shows the princess dowager seated on a sofa lulling the king to sleep, whilst Bute steals his sceptre, and Fox (Pitt's rival) picks his pocket. A third, entitled 'The Mountebank,' represents Bute as a quack-doctor standing on a stage recommending his golden pills; Smollett, the paid Scotch advocate of Scotchmen, who conducted a paper called the *Briton*, which Bute had established in his own defence, is by his side dressed as a mountebank, whilst the princess dowager, dressed as a witch, looks on half concealed by a curtain.

'By my saul, laddies,' Smollett is made to say, 'I tell ye truly I went round about, and I thank my geud stars I found a passage through Wales, which conducted me to a' the muckle places in the land, where I soon got relief, and straightway commenced to doctor for the benefit of mesel' and countrymen. See

here, my bra' lads, in these bags are contained the gowden lozenges, a never-failing remedy that gives present ease, famous throughout the known world for their excellent quality. Now, as ye are a' my countrymen, and stand in most need of a cure, I will gi'e every mon o' ye twa or three thousand of these lozenges once a year to make ye hauld up your heads, and turn out muckle men.' Bute, as the quack-doctor, adds: 'Awa' wi' ye to the de'il, ye soothern loons; but a' ye bonny lads fra the north o' Tweed mak' haste and come to me; I am now in a capacity to gi'e ye a' relief. I ken fu' weel your distemper—I dunna mean that so peculiar to our country occasioned by the immoderate use of oatmeal. But it is the gowden itch wi' which ye are troubled (and, in truth, most folk are) that I learnt the art to cure. I mysel' was ne'er free fra this muckle itch while I lived in the north, but, having a geud staff to depend upon, I resolved to travel into the south to seek a cure.'

But the king, Lord Bute, or the princess dowager seemed to take little heed of the popular feeling, or, if they did, were at least determined

that it should not prevent them from seeking the political ends they desired. The princess imbued her son with the idea of exerting his royal prerogative, and rendering himself independent of either the Lords or the Commons, to whom he should dictate in all things. ‘George, be a king—be a king,’ was her cry; and the conduct of his life showed that her lesson had sunk into his heart, taken root there, and produced vile fruits.

‘The instant his prerogative was concerned, or his bigotry interfered with, or his will thwarted,’ says Lord Brougham, ‘the most bitter animosity, the most calculating coldness of heart took possession of his breast, and swayed it by turns.’

To exert the royal prerogative, as the king understood the phrase, meant to strip the great houses of England of their hereditary influences; to reduce the powerful nobility to the condition of the petty, servile German nobles, in order that he might be able to exert his power over them with absolute sway. Church and State were to be governed, even to their minutest details, by his supreme will; the people were

to have no voice, the ministry no power, the king was to reign omnipotent in all things; his creatures alone were to rise to places of state, not by virtue of long lineage, splendid talents, or great deeds, but by reason of his royal favour, which would counterbalance the loss of all other qualities; whilst those who in any way differed from his opinions were to sink to the dark oblivion into which his displeasure would perpetually condemn them. All genius and talents were to be rewarded and gauged according to the dull level of his judgment, and all show of national independence was to be instantly crushed. Such was the dream of magnificent despotism which seized hold upon the little mind of the dull monarch.

He was now informed that the moment had come for him to exert his prerogative, and, backed by the dowager's ambition, and Lord Bute's desire for power and distinction, George strove with all his might to be a ruler of his people. With the dogged obstinacy that ever distinguished his character, he determined to take the first steps towards such an end, by establishing a peace in spite of the opposition

of the whole nation, and the prejudice it might entail to the country by giving up the most valuable of the English conquests for a cessation of hostilities, which might mean little more than a truce to his unprincipled allies.

The first movement made was to send the Duke of Bedford to Paris as ambassador, when he agreed with the French government to a treaty of peace. As his Grace passed through London on his way to the French capital, he was jeered at and hissed by the populace, who had caught wind of his intended mission. This treatment so alarmed my Lord Bute, who had previously been heedless of the storm of vile epithets and ugly words showered on him, which, however, could break no bones, that from this time he never went out without an escort of prize-fighters, called in the language of the day 'mashers.' His sacred, though obstinate, Majesty showed greater wisdom yet, if less courage, by carefully staying at home, and his royal seclusion was shared by his mother.

The treaty of peace could not be ratified except by the sanction of parliament. To obtain this was a herculean labour, which it

was known could never be honestly accomplished. Yet Lord Bute did not despair of gaining it by fraud, with the sanction and approval of the king. It was a step of vast importance, not only so far as the minister's own power and future career were concerned, but inasmuch as it would determine whether the king was to be ruled, or to rule. To succeed, therefore, no such trifles as honour, principle, or even personal dislike, were to be allowed to stand in the way. Bute, who had boasted that honesty should be the sign by which his administration should be known, now determined to resort to wholesale bribery and corruption. Henry Fox, Pitt's great rival, though thoroughly detested by His Majesty and the princess, was called to their aid, and made leader of the House of Commons. To secure his services, the lucrative post of paymaster, and a sinecure office were given him, and he was at once made a member of the cabinet.

It was through him that the House of Commons must be bribed; and he set to work at his assigned task without a trace of false delicacy. Walpole says,

‘He directly attacked the separate members of the House of Commons ; and with so little decorum on the part of either buyer or seller, that a shop was publicly opened at the Pay-office, whither the members flocked, and received the wages of their venality in bank-bills, even to so low a sum as two hundred pounds for their votes on the treaty. Twenty-five thousand pounds, as Martin, Secretary of the Treasury, afterwards owned, were issued in one morning ; and in a single fortnight a vast majority was purchased to approve the peace . . . The profusion which was exercised on this occasion, and which reduced the Court to stop even the payments of the king’s bed-chamber, made men recall severely to mind the king’s declaration on the choice of his parliament, that he would not permit any money to be spent on elections.’

Years afterwards, Ross Mackay, who had been private secretary to Lord Bute, and was subsequently made Treasurer of the Ordnance, told Lord Besborough,

‘With my own hand I secured above one hundred and twenty votes on that vital ques-

tion to ministers. Eighty thousand pounds were set apart for the purpose. Forty members of the House of Commons received from me a thousand pounds each. To eighty others I paid five hundred pounds a-piece.'

Having secured the interests of the House of Commons in this vile fashion, it was now imperative to gain that of the lords. The first member of the upper house whose sentiments were gauged was the Duke of Devonshire—the prince of Whigs, as the princess dowager derisively called him—but his Grace declined to support the Court scheme. A little while afterwards, when he went to pay his duty to the king, and sent a page to announce his attendance on His Majesty, royalty indignantly refused him the light of its countenance. 'I will not see him,' said the king. When the page hesitated, from amazement at such a message, he was ordered to go at once, and deliver the words as they had been spoken. The duke, though astonished and indignant, had presence of mind left to send the page to ask what he should do with his key of office as Lord Chamberlain. A brief reply was returned :

‘Orders will be given for that.’ The duke went hastily home, and, without waiting for the royal orders, took his key, and immediately carried it to the Secretary of State. Next morning, his brother, Lord George Cavendish, and his brother-in-law, Lord Besborough, resigned their respective places as Comptroller of the Household, and Postmaster-general. Five days after, the Marquis of Rockingham resigned his place as one of the lords of the bed-chamber. Lord Ashburnham, who held a similar post, did likewise, as did also my Lord Kinnoul. These vacancies were quickly filled up by those pledged to support the government.

But the work was not yet complete. Lord Granby was daily expected on his return from the army, and messengers were stationed at various seaports to meet and bribe him with such offers as the Ordnance, and command of the army; the king, in order to make such an offer as the latter, completely set aside the claims of Marshal Ligonier, who had served with Marlborough, and had been invested with the insignia of the Bath by George II. on the field after the battle of Dettingen, where he had dis-

tinguished himself. Marshal Conway, who it was known would receive no bribe, was, to keep him out of the way, selected to conduct the army to England, and the Duke of York, the king's brother, who was not cautious in concealing his hatred for Bute and his measures, was sent to Italy.

On December 9th, 1762, the debate on the preliminaries took place in both Houses of Parliament. There was much excitement, though no one had any doubt as to the success of the government scheme. In the Upper House, the Duke of Grafton, looking full at Lord Bute, openly accused him of bribery; in the Lower House, Pitt, who, though ill, had himself carried within the bar, from whence he had to be assisted to his seat, for three hours and a half denounced the peace as prejudicial to England's prosperity. Then, exhausted, he left the scene as his rival, Fox, stood up to reply. In the House of Commons the preliminaries were approved of by a majority of three hundred and nineteen against sixty-five; in the Upper House there was no division. The Court clique had gained the day. Nothing could equal the

exultation of its members. 'Now my son is a king,' exclaimed the princess, in an outburst of triumph. 'Never more shall the Whig grandees be admitted to power,' exclaimed His Majesty, forgetful that but for the Whigs, over whose downfall he exulted, his great grandfather had never left his little German Electorate to sit upon a throne. My Lord Bute, who was a lover of fine sentiments, satisfied himself on this occasion with an epigrammatic sentence; he trusted that a record of the share which he had in securing peace to his country might be inscribed on his tomb.

Thus a reign which had commenced under the unclouded auspices of domestic peace was suddenly turned to one of rancour; a united government divided into factions, a contented nation stirred to its centre by animosities, by the united efforts of an unprincipled, dissembling woman, a dull, weak, narrow-minded king, and a designing, ambitious Scotchman.

The vengeance of the worthy trio during this crisis and after their victory is worth recording. His Gracious Majesty, at the first cabinet council held after the Duke of Devonshire's resigna-

tion, took a pen and crossed his Grace's name from the council-book, a wanton and unmerited insult; moreover, the Dukes of Newcastle, and Grafton, and the Marquis of Rockingham were dismissed from the lieutenancies of their several counties, and a like affront was only saved the Duke of Devonshire by the interference of Fox. His Grace, however, resigned his lieutenancy after the dismissal of his friends. Mr. Wilkinson, and Mr. Earle, were dismissed from the Board of Ordnance for their votes, and Thomas Townshend from the Green Cloth, without notification; Admiral Forbes, a younger son of the Earl of Granard, was removed from the Admiralty to make room for a friend of Fox, and Mr. Schutz, who had been for seven years a gentleman of the bed-chamber, was dismissed because he had no vote in parliament, and could be of no use there. This mean vengeance went further yet, when the widow of Admiral Philip Cavendish was deprived of her post as housekeeper of one of the public offices, because her husband had been related to the Duke of Devonshire.

But the triumph was destined to be of but

short duration. The expenses connected with the negotiations for peace were so heavy, that a sum of three millions and a half were borrowed in order to defray them, and with such improvidence as to leave a profit of £350,000 to the contractors; to pay this it was resolved that a tax should be levied on cider, then a popular drink amongst the middle and lower classes. At this the indignation of the nation was raised once more, but with as little effect as when it had protested against peace. In the country the farmers threatened to feed their pigs with apples, or cut down the apple-trees. Two protests were entered against the bill on the journals of the House of Lords; the House of Commons likewise protested; the City sheriffs, without having asked leave, presented a petition to the king praying him not to pass the bill; but George was determined to be a king, and passed it next morning, the majority in both houses being tools of Lord Bute's.

Nothing could now exceed the public hatred of Bute; his effigy was hung in public upon a gibbet, torn, and burned by the mob. He went

abroad in disguise; once taking alarm at some rumour of threatened vengeance by the crowd, he said, 'We shall have thirty thousand men come down to St. James's.' In the city, toasts were drunk to wit, beauty, virtue, and honour, these being the ironical designations of the king, queen, princess dowager, and Lord Bute. The Duchess of Bedford set a dangerous example to her caste by refusing to visit the drawing-rooms of the dowager, and the press teemed with fresh abuse. The princess was openly charged with having 'been so lost to all sense of honour and shame, and so abandoned in principle, as to sacrifice the peace, prosperity, and security of the English nation for the sum of five hundred thousand pounds, which she received from the Court of France;' and in one of the popular caricatures the king was represented as a donkey, on whose back the favourite rode triumphantly.

In the midst of this tumult, Lord Bute suddenly resigned. By character he was cautious; and terror of the public wrath had driven him from office, it was said; he, by way of accounting for his resignation, declared his health had

begun to suffer from his attendance to public business.

‘He was professedly the first or sole minister very little more than ten months,’ writes the author of the ‘History of the Minority,’ ‘during which time he revived national animosities between the English and Scotch. He revived party distinctions among the English; he was the means of disgracing the best of our nobility, and of dismissing the ablest servants of the crown; he stifled by his conduct the acclamations due from the people to their king; weakened the crown by disposing of almost all the reversionary patents; turned out, with inhumanity, the innocent dependents of former ministers; increased the peerage beyond the example of any of his predecessors; borrowed public money on exorbitant terms, and invented a new excise.’

Henry Fox retired at the same time as Lord Bute, and was raised to the peerage as Lord Holland.

CHAPTER IV.

Dark Pictures in the King's Life—Buckingham House—
 Birth of a Royal Heir—Seclusion of Their Majesties
 —Edward, Duke of York—The Princess Augusta—
 A Gay and Gallant Soldier—Brunswick's Prince and
 his Popularity—The King's Insanity—Death of 'Billy
 the Butcher'—His Highness of Gloucester—Private
 Marriage—Romance of the Danish Court—The Queen
 and her Lover—Death of the Princess Dowager—
 Lord Bute's Wealth.

HISTORY holds no sadder or more painful pictures than those which the domestic life of George III. occasionally present during the long and eventful period which elapsed from his marriage, at the age of twenty-three, until the grave closed over him, in his eighty-first year. Yet they are not the less instructive because of their dark colours and sombre shadows, nor the less interesting from the absence, so far as the king was concerned, of the glaring colours of vice which made the

reigns of the last two monarchs flagrant and revolting illustrations in the records of courts.

Early in the king's reign, the Civil List was fixed at £800,000 a year, and after his marriage a gracious parliament settled on his queen the substantial sum of £40,000 per annum, with a dowry of £100,000, and Richmond Old Park and Somerset House, in case she became a widow. The king, however, not satisfied with these residences, purchased Buckingham House, which had been built by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, for the sum of £21,000, and presented it to Her Majesty; and from this time it was usually called the Queen's House. In 1825, this red-brick mansion was pulled down, and the present hideous pile of buildings (known as Buckingham Palace) erected on its site. To this residence the king and his consort, early in their married life, retired from the more lively quarters of St. James's, which Horace Walpole said was 'not a prison straight enough.'

The same seclusion which concealed his private life from his subjects before his marriage was now continued, the dowager taking

every precaution that none but her friends should have access to him.

‘It will scarcely be believed,’ says Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, ‘but it is nevertheless true, that in order to prevent his conversing with any persons, or receiving any written intimations, anonymous or otherwise, between the drawing-room and the door of Carlton House (the princess’s residence), when he was returning from thence to St. James’s, or to Buckingham House, after his evening visits to his mother, she never failed to accompany him till he got into his sedan-chair.’

Previous to the removal of the royal pair from a palace that had witnessed so many strange and eventful scenes, a child was born to them destined to bring them much tribulation. This happened on August 12, 1762, at half-past seven in the morning, the anniversary day of the succession of George Lewis Guelph, Elector of Brunswick, to the English throne. My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor had sat up all night to be witnesses at the birth of the princely infant, whilst in an adjoining chamber, their Graces

of Devonshire and Rutland, my Lords Hardwicke, Huntingdon, Talbot, Bute, Masham, and Cantalupe, with all the ladies of the bed-chamber and maids-of-honour, were in attendance. The 'person that waited on the king with the news of Her Majesty being delivered of a prince, received a present of a £500 bank-bill;' whilst the intelligence was made known to the general public by the roaring of guns from the Tower, and the ringing of many bells from turrets and steeples.

The infant was baptised George Augustus Frederick, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the sponsors being the princess dowager, the Duke of Cumberland, and the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. On this day, the queen's bed, magnificently upholstered in crimson velvet, was removed to the great drawing-room.

'Though she is not to see company in form,' writes Horace Walpole, 'yet it looks as if they had intended people should have been there, as all who presented themselves were admitted, which were very few, for it had not been notified—I suppose, to prevent too great a crowd. All I have heard named besides those in waiting

were the Duchess of Queensberry, Lady Dalkeith, Mrs. Grenville, and about four more ladies.'

A few days after the baptism, the royal heir was created Prince of Wales; 'for the eldest son of the British monarch,' as Hume says, 'does not possess that title by inheritance, but by creation.'

A short time subsequent to this event, their Majesties moved into the Queen's House, where they may be said to have set aside all signs of royalty, and lived in almost uninterrupted seclusion. To furnish this residence, the other palaces were more or less stripped of pictures and furniture, especially Hampton Court, a place which the king could not endure, from the fact that in this residence his grandfather had once, in a sudden fit of passion, struck him a blow. George III. never afterwards could pass through the room where the occurrence happened without betraying great repugnance. The king, influenced by the close habits of seclusion to which he had been subjected, as well as from a consciousness of his dulness, and from an intolerance in others of a brilliancy to which he could not lay claim, retired as much as possible from

the nobility, and was scarcely to be seen or spoken to except on drawing-room days. His consort, on the other hand, excessively homely in appearance, without grace or polish of manner, or one intellectual trait to brighten her natural dulness, but steeped in an imperious, narrow-minded pride characteristic of her insignificant and stolid race, was as suitable a mate for him, as she was unfit to reign over courtiers whose sparkling wit and high-bred beauty were proverbial, whose grace and courtesy were fascinating, whose manners and conversation, studiously cultivated as an art, made their vices almost acceptable.

The royal pair sank to the dead level of domesticity on the very threshold of life, to the disappointment of the nobility, who had naturally looked forward to the reign of the young monarch as a period of gaiety and brilliancy. The Queen's House came to be regarded by them as a place of imprisonment and gloom, and was not inaptly named Holyrood House. There were, it was true, two weekly drawing-rooms and two yearly balls, but they had nothing in common with those of former reigns.

Gambling, the fashionable amusement of the age, was strictly forbidden in the royal palaces, and the drawing-rooms held on Sundays were abolished because it was considered a profanation of the Sabbath. The king had asked Lady Dorset as a favour not to hold assemblies at her house on that day.

‘I am but a satellite, please your Majesty,’ replied the lively countess, ‘moving in the orbit of a superior planet.’

‘I understand your reproof,’ said the king; ‘the orbit of the planet shall be altered.’

‘Then,’ remarked her ladyship, ‘the satellite must follow.’

And so the royal drawing-rooms were held no more on the day of rest.

The king had, a few months before the birth of the Prince of Wales, a brief illness which was probably more serious than was generally supposed, as may be judged from a letter which Lord Chancellor Hardwicke wrote to Lord Royston in June, 1762. ‘I fear,’ said my lord, ‘His Majesty was very ill, for physicians do not deal so roughly with such patients without necessity. God grant him a speedy recovery.’

Whatever the nature of his illness may have been, it certainly for some time left behind traces of mental depression from which he was unable to rid himself. In one of Dr. Birch's MS. letters written at this period, preserved in the British Museum, he remarks—'His Majesty is observed of late to have less cheerful spirits than usual, which even the queen has taken notice of with some concern.' No doubt this indisposition was the shadow of the coming dreadful malady which soon clouded his life.

Under these circumstances, and with such patrons as their Majesties, it was not to be wondered at that the royal drawing-rooms missed the animation, splendour, and gaiety which had distinguished those of the last monarch. The king looked grave as he received the homage of his courtiers; the queen smiled, but could not venture to express herself in the language of her subjects. Some scrutiny was now observed as to the characters of the ladies admitted to the presence of the queen; royal courtesans were no longer in request, and some show of decency was expected in the conversation that floated round the throne. The old

order of things was thoroughly reversed in all its details; wit fell meaningless on the royal ears, grace found no favour in the royal eyes, and beauty was regarded with jealousy by the homely queen as an incitive to wicked temptations that might waylay the virtuous king. Laughter was no longer heard, delicate morsels of scandal were whispered no more, fashions were wilfully neglected, and intrigues were foregone in the royal presence, where manners now became strictly decorous, but, alas, terribly dull.

Of Her Majesty, one of the lampoons of the age declared :

‘ She hates the manners of the times,
And all our fashionable crimes ;
And fondly wishes to restore
The golden age and days of yore,
When silly, simple women thought
A breach of chastity a fault ;
Esteem’d those modish things divorces,
The very worst of human curses,
And deem’d assemblies, cards, and dice
The springs of every sort of vice.
Romantic notions! All the fair
At such absurdities must stare,
And, spite of all her pains, will still
Love routs, adultery, and quadrille.’

Walpole gives an account of a ball which their Majesties gave shortly after their mar-

riage, to which but six of the nobility not immediately connected with the Court were bidden. His Majesty danced with the queen the whole time; and his sister, the Princess Augusta, with her four younger brothers. Some of the lords and ladies of the bed-chamber were present, and the maids-of-honour, but none were permitted to sit in the royal presence, save the princess dowager, the Duchess of Bedford, and Lady Bute. This lively entertainment commenced at half an hour after six, and at one o'clock the company were dismissed without supper.

It was scarcely to be wondered at that the brilliant and beautiful women, the wits and fine gentlemen, whose routs, masquerades, and divers amusements alone kept the town from a state of stagnation, gradually deserted the royal drawing-rooms, and were but on rare occasions, when their attendance was looked on as a necessary duty, seen within the walls of St. James's or Buckingham House.

According to Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, 'All the splendour of a Court was laid aside, or only exhibited for a few hours on a birthday.

Rarely during the first twenty years after his accession, did the king join in any scene of public amusement, if we except the diversion of the theatre. Still more rarely did he sit down at table with any of his courtiers or nobility. His repasts, private, short, and temperate, never led to the slightest excess.'

In private life, nothing could be more simple than the *régime* which the royal pair adopted. The queen spent a great part of the morning with her tutor, Dr. Majendie, who strove to teach her English, but to the end of her life she never wrote or spoke the language with ease. When her lessons were over, her needle-work commenced, and this employment was succeeded by exercise, when she walked or rode, accompanied by her royal companion, till dinner time. In the evening, she played on the harpsichord and sang, then joined in a quiet game of cribbage, and so the day ended in monotonous dulness. When they adjourned to Richmond in the summer, their habits were unaltered. Their Majesties had, indeed, come to regard all public ceremonies as a tax imposed on royalty, of which they were ever

anxious to rid themselves, and this increased their unpopularity amongst all classes.

‘The Court,’ writes Horace Walpole to my Lord Hertford, ‘independent of politics, makes a strange figure. The recluse life led here at Richmond—which is carried to such an excess of privacy and economy, that the queen’s *friseur* waits on them at dinner, and four pounds only of beef are allowed for their soup—disgusts all sorts of people. The drawing-rooms are abandoned. Lady Buckingham was the only woman there on Sunday se’nnight. In short, one hears of nothing but dissatisfaction, which, in the city, rises almost to treason.’

With the exception of Edward, Duke of York, the king’s brothers and sisters were yet retained in the seclusion which the king had once undergone, by the princess dowager. Prince Henry, a lively lad, was one day asked if he had been confined with the epidemic cold. ‘Confined!’ he answered, ‘that I am, but without any cold.’ On another occasion the princess asked him, when he had been long silent, if he were sulky. He replied, he was not; he was only thinking.

‘And, pray,’ said the dowager, ‘what are you thinking of?’

‘I was thinking,’ answered the boy, ‘what I should feel, if I had a son as unhappy as you make me.’

In 1767, the eldest of the king’s brothers, Edward, Duke of York, died. Gay, gallant, and free in his manners, he was a general favourite with all, save his mother and Lord Bute, whose schemes and favours towards his countrymen the prince’s lively tongue did not hesitate to ridicule. In appearance, he is described as having loose and perpetually rolling eyes that were extremely short-sighted, heavy features, and hair so light that it resembled feathers. He had been sent into the Navy a few years before his grandfather’s death, and, after a service of eleven months, was made captain of a frigate named the *Phoenix*. He was subsequently present at the capture of Cherbourg, sailing under Commander Howe, and likewise at St. Cas, where he behaved with great spirit.

Before he was eighteen, encouraged by his grandfather, he had managed to escape from the maternal influence, and freely mixed in the

society of the day, to which his elder brother was then a stranger, and, with that easy gallantry proverbial to princes, he felt little difficulty in making love to some of the fairest women whom fate cast in his way. One of the first of these was my Lady Essex, then young and singularly beautiful, whose attractions, however, in a little while had to give way for those of the young wife of Charles, third Duke of Richmond, to whom he chattered a good deal of love and of the passion which he declared consumed him. His errant, though princely fancy again took wings, and this time settled on a charming widow, Lady Mary Coke, who was declared the envy of her sex, inasmuch as she was the happy possessor of youth, health, wit, wealth, beauty, and, better than all, liberty. But though Lady Mary always spoke of him as her betrothed, and mourned for his early death, the gay prince was not constant to her, but sought fresh attraction in Lady Stanhope.

This charming woman vastly gratified the world by affording it some amusing scandal concerning her domestic feuds with her lord and master, Sir William Stanhope, brother to

my Lord Chesterfield. The story is told of this happy pair that, returning from the Continent on one occasion, Sir William stopped the carriage at Blackheath, and, getting out, made his spouse the following vastly polite speech—‘*Madam,*’ said he, ‘I hope I shall never see your face again.’ The lady was not behindhand in courtesy. ‘*Sir,*’ she replied, ‘I will take all the care I can that you shall not.’ And so they parted.

This was the lady to whom Edward, Duke of York, made love—a proceeding in which he was encouraged by her scampish brother, Sir Francis Delaval, who believed Sir William to be in a dying state, and who fondly hoped he might have a royal duke as his brother-in-law. But the fates decreed otherwise. The prince was fond of the Continent, where he had spent many a pleasant day, and had made friends with the foreign courts he visited during his journeys. When in 1762, on the passing of the peace bill, he had been sent out of England, that his too open expressions might not injure the policy of my Lord Bute, he willingly betook himself to the pleasant shores of the Mediterranean, where he enjoyed himself much to his satisfaction.

When he was expected at Florence, Clement XIII., who then sat on the Papal throne, directed Cardinal Albani to inform Sir Horace Mann, the English minister at that city, that, if His Royal Highness wished to visit Rome, he should be received there with all the honours due to his birth. Moreover, the nuncio at the winter city, was requested by his Holiness to wait on the prince upon his arrival, and deliver him the same most civil message, which was received with pleasure. To Rome His Highness went, where he was entertained by the Pope with graceful and dignified ceremonies.

Some rumours of his pleasures and extravagances reaching home, the pious Christians round the king, complained of his brother's ways, and a popular preacher delivered a sermon for which he selected the text, 'The younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.' Alarmed by these reports, the king ordered his brother home, and took a peremptory means of securing obedience by stopping his remittances, which sensible scheme had not, however, the desired effect,

for, though bereft of supplies, the duke continued his riotous living in a far country.

It happened that he was in Paris, in 1767, when news reached him that a woman fair to see, who had once held his heart, was now at Genoa. This information at once made the prince impatient to reach Italy, and the object of his love. He therefore left Paris at once; on his way, he was entertained by the Duc de Villars at his villa, situated between Aix and Marseilles, where a ball 'was made for him,' at which he gaily danced all night, and then, impatient of delay, insisted on getting into his carriage, and proceeding on his journey. When he arrived at Marseilles, he was seized with sudden shuddering, but again determined to proceed on his way, and next day reached Monaco. Here he was obliged to be confined to bed, and, on the physicians being called, it was found a heavy fever had set in, under which he rallied for fourteen days, and then died, in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

A second child was born to the royal pair in August, 1763, who was baptised Frederick, was afterwards created Duke of York, and ultimately

played an important part in the history of the country, of which more anon. At the close of the year which gave him birth, the dreary seclusion into which their Majesties had sunk was temporarily dissipated by the marriage of the king's eldest sister, the Princess Augusta. The princess was not without some personal charms, though she had the heavy features and light hair hereditary to the house of Guelph. Her complexion was fair and soft, and her figure shapely; moreover, she had now reached the age of six and twenty, and it was considered desirable that a husband should be found for her. Her mother, the dowager, had been brought to arrive at this conclusion from the fact that she discerned the princess was inclined to meddle in the domestic politics of the Court. Like her brother Edward, and indeed most of her brothers and sisters, she had little affection for her mother, detested Bute, and, so far as in her lay, was apt to thwart his policy and unite her sympathies, with those of the populace, in favour of William Pitt. That she might communicate this dangerous sentiment to the young queen, became a dread to the

dowager; for Her Majesty might influence the weak-minded king, and allure him from the maternal allegiance to which he had hitherto blindly submitted.

The dowager, however, could not hinder the princess's visits to the Queen's House, but, to hinder the expression of any disloyal speech, she accompanied her there, and in this way prevented a freedom of conversation which she had come to fear. Meanwhile, she cast her eyes about for a husband who would remove the princess to a sufficiently safe distance from the scene of English politics.

To accomplish this purpose, Charles William Ferdinand, hereditary prince of Brunswick, was selected; for, though the rival house of Brunswick was hated by the dowager, yet she deigned to honour it with an alliance of one of her offspring, because it suited her purpose. The lady's dowry was, therefore, fixed at the handsome sum of £80,000, with an annuity of £8,000 a year, £5,000 of which was chargeable on the Irish revenue, and the remainder on Hanover. Such was the golden prize held out to the prince, who was bidden to come and

claim its possession. His Royal Highness was nephew to Frederick the Great of Prussia, and was, moreover, a gay and gallant soldier, who had fought well at the famous battle of Hastenbeck, and likewise at the siege of Crefeld. Not only was His Highness brave, but, what is oftentimes more in women's eyes, he was handsome. A slight, tall, soldierly figure, and a bright, sun-tanned face added to his attractions. He was the *beau ideal* of a hero and a lover, and the people were all prepared to receive him as such, and give him a hearty welcome.

Accordingly, when he set foot on English ground at Harwich, he was met by a right loyal throng, who greeted him with shouts and demonstrations of joy, and at night they almost tore down the house at which he stayed, in order that they might see him again. At Chelmsford his reception was quite as enthusiastic. Here it was that an honest Quaker, forcing his way into the room where the prince was resting, pulled off his hat, and said, 'Friend, my religion forbids me to fight, but I honour those that fight well. Thou art a valiant prince,

and art to be married to a lovely princess; love her, make her a good husband, and the Lord bless you both.’ Alas! His Highness did not know what the good man said, but he understood that some courteous speech was being made him, and, with the gracious instinct of a prince and a soldier, grasped the Quaker by the hand in right friendly fashion.

If the friendly mood of the people prepared him for a like reception in the royal palace, he was doomed to disappointment. Though living far from the land of political strife, he had made himself intimately acquainted with the workings of the state machinery, and had openly, and in no measured terms, avowed his admiration for Pitt and his policy. This was an outrage which the king and the dowager could not forgive, and they now determined to show him they had not forgotten his imprudent speeches. When he arrived in London, he at once called to pay his respects to their Majesties, who on this occasion were by no means gracious; the fourth question they put to him being, ‘When do you go?’ From the Queen’s House he hied him to Leicester House, to wait on the dow-

ager, and see his future wife for the first time. He found his bride-elect gracious and pleasing, and he who had already proved himself a gallant soldier, now showed he was likewise a polished courtier, for he delicately hinted he had intended to return unwed, if the princess had not pleased him, but now he looked forward to the day of his marriage with delight.

It had previously been decided by His Majesty that the prince's stay should be rendered as short and as disagreeable as possible, and this resolution was now put into effect. Somerset House was appointed as his residence previous to his marriage, but no guards were stationed there, and the Lord Steward of the Household was instructed to select the company who should dine with him. The marriage took place not in the chapel royal, but in the great council chamber, on Monday, January 16, 1764, when the servants of the king and queen were forbidden to appear in new clothes, as was customary on such occasions, and the ceremony was curtailed as much as possible of all splendour.

The public were quick to notice the petty indignities shown to the prince by the Court,

and, aware of the cause which prompted them, soon resented these slights. The popularity of the king still more decreased, and that of the prince rose rapidly. As he went one morning to St. James's, he saw in the crowd which surrounded him a soldier in the uniform of Elliot's Light Horse, a regiment with which he had once served in action, and gracefully kissed hands to the man; the crowd immediately turned to see who was the individual so favoured. 'What,' said they, 'does he know you?' 'Yes,' answered the soldier; 'he once led me into a scrape which nobody but himself could have brought me out of again.'

Horace Walpole, who relates the story, adds, 'You may guess how much this added to the prince's popularity, which was at high-water mark before.'

An opportunity soon occurred of giving vent to this feeling publicly. On the Thursday after the marriage, it was known that the prince and his bride, and the Court, were to attend a performance at Covent Garden, and the throng which gathered round the theatre was enormous.

‘The crowd to see the Prince of Brunswick at the play exceeded all belief,’ writes that worthy chronicler of gossip, Horace Walpole, to Horace Mann. ‘Your brother James told me this morning that he went to Covent Garden at two in the afternoon, to wait till the doors of the play-house should be opened. He soon found himself in such a mob, that he could not even lift his hand to his head, and so remained for five hours, without getting in at last; and, though he had stood in the open piazza, he perspired so violently that, at his return, he was forced to change every thread he had on. The shouts, claps, and huzzas were immoderate.’

When the king and queen entered the house, they were received with chilling silence, but, on the appearance of the prince and princess, the house rang with cheers. The gallery called for the hero of popular favour to come forward, and, when he complied, fresh applause filled the theatre, whilst His Majesty looked on in grave displeasure. In the middle of the play, the prince went out, at which, according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, ‘the audience were

agitated by various surmises. The fact was, His Serene Highness, as he did not well understand the language of the players, took that opportunity to pay his compliments to the Royal Society, of which he was elected a Fellow, and Lord Moreton, being in the chair, made him a very polite speech in the name of the society, which His Highness answered without hesitation.'

When he returned, the applause was renewed. On Saturday night, when the royal family attended the opera, the enthusiasm displayed was greater, if possible, than on the former night, and the crowd as large. So thronged indeed was the house, that three fair ladies, to wit, her Grace of Leeds, Lady Denbigh, and Lady Scarborough, sat on chairs between the scenes. The doors of the front boxes were thrown open, and the passages filled; and women of fashion, arrayed in gorgeous silks and floating feathers, stood crushing against each other on the stairs during the performance.

On the next day, Sunday, the prince more than ever offended the Court party by paying a visit to Pitt at his country house at Hayes,

with whom he remained in conference for two hours ; on another occasion he visited the Duke of Newcastle, who was as fully obnoxious to the king and Lord Bute, and arranged to meet the chiefs of the opposition at the duke's residence, which he did on a subsequent day. Nor was this all. He thrice dined with the Duke of Cumberland, who had not been to Court for a considerable time on account of a political disagreement with His Majesty. On one of the occasions on which the old duke was his host, His Serene Highness, to show his resentment to his royal brother-in-law, was guilty of a breach of etiquette, which was not soon forgotten by the king. The incident is narrated by Walpole, who says, the first time the prince dined with the duke, he 'was appointed to be at St. James's at half an hour after seven to a concert. As the time drew near, de Feronce (his chief secretary) pulled out his watch. The duke took the hint and said, "I am sorry to part with you, but I fear your time is come." He replied, "*N'importe*," and sat on drinking coffee, and it was half an hour after eight before he set out from Upper

Grosvenor Street for St. James's.' On another occasion, when a ball was given for him at the Queen's House, the prince did not put in an appearance until two hours after it had begun. At this assembly there were none of the nobility present, besides their Majesties' servants, but the Duchesses of Ancaster and Marlborough, and Lord Bute's two daughters; the usual royal economy was observed, and the guests were sent home supperless. The next day there was a subscription ball for him at Carlisle House, Soho, when a hundred and fifty men subscribed five guineas each, in return for which each received three tickets. This was chiefly got up by the Dukes of Grafton and Devonshire, whose very names were hateful to the royal ears. The Duke of Cumberland was present, and all the beauties of the town; the whole affair was brilliant and magnificent. The prince was dressed in a rich suit of silver brocade that cost eleven guineas a yard, and so delighted was he with the entertainment that he danced till five o'clock in the morning. That day he and his bride reluctantly left town for Harwich, from whence they were to embark; on their way they were to

pass through Witham, and rest the night there at Lord Abercorn's. My lord stayed in town, and did not trouble to play the host. My Lady Strafford said to him, 'And so, my lord, I hear your house is to be royally filled on Wednesday.' 'And serenely,' he answered, and closed his mouth for the remainder of the day.

Their departure had been originally fixed for the 26th, and they were now obliged to keep their agreement, though the prince would willingly have tarried; however, a message was conveyed to him that a yacht was in readiness to convey them home, and he was obliged to take the hint. The day of their departure was by no means propitious; the weather was wild and threatening, and continued so on the following day when they set sail. A tempest overtook their yacht, and no news of them reached St. James's until the middle of February. Meanwhile a rumour arose that they had been driven away by the Court; the City was in an uproar, the town excited; reports were spread that the princess's yacht was sunk on the coast of Holland, and their supposed deaths were said to have been caused by the king and the dowager;

even the basket-women in St. James's Market, according to Mrs. Carter, spoke their minds, and wished 'that those who sent the prince and princess away were in their places.' They arrived, however, in safety, after considerable danger, at Helvoetsluys. The daughter of this prince and princess afterwards became the unhappy wife of George IV.

Early in 1765, the king, then in the twenty-eighth year of his age, was afflicted by one of those mental attacks to which he afterwards became subject through life. To the public at large it was announced that His Majesty had caught cold and fever; but, this being considered an insufficient reason to give a gossiping and curious world for his confinement during three months, it was afterwards stated that a humour which should have appeared in his face had, by the neglect of his physicians, settled on his breast. The nation became anxious, but, so well was the secret kept by those allowed to see the king, that his prime minister was left in ignorance of the nature of his illness, and it was commonly whispered His Majesty had fallen into a consumption.

The sudden manner in which his madness first presented itself is recorded by Philip Withers, senior Page of the Presence, in a rare pamphlet called 'History of the Royal Malady.' The king and queen were driving through Windsor Forest in a phaeton, when the king abruptly stopped the horses, and saying, 'There he is,' descended.

'His Majesty now approached a venerable oak,' says the author, who was in attendance at the time, 'that had enlivened the solitude of that quarter of the park upwards of a century and a half. At the distance of a few yards, he uncovered and advanced, bowing with the utmost respect, and then, seizing one of the lower branches, he shook it with the most apparent cordiality and regard, just as a man shakes his friend by the hand.

'The queen turned pale with astonishment, the reins dropped from her hands. Never was I in such a consternation lest the horses in the carriage, finding themselves under no control, should run headlong to destruction. Nor did I dare call for assistance, lest the attendants should witness a scene that I desired to keep

from their view. At last Her Majesty became attentive to her situation, and, as the reins were happily within reach, they were recovered, and the queen commanded me to dismount, and to go and intimate, in a soothing voice and suppliant terms, that Her Majesty wished for his company. On my approach, I perceived the king was in earnest conversation, for His Majesty anticipated the answer from his royal friend, and then made a reply. It was the King of Prussia with whom His Majesty enjoyed this rural interview; continental politics were the subject. What I heard it would be unpardonable to divulge. I cannot, however, withhold a remark that must fill every loyal bosom with pleasure; His Majesty, though under a momentary dereliction of reason, evinced the most cordial attachment to freedom and the Protestant faith.

‘I approached with reverence.

“May it please your Majesty——”

“Don’t you see I am engaged?” answered the king.

‘I bowed and withdrew.

“Go again,” said the queen.

‘I went.

“May I presume to inform your Majesty that——”

“What is the matter?” said the king, in great surprise.

“Her Majesty is in the carriage, and I am commanded to intimate her desire of your Majesty’s company.”

“Good lack-a-day,” said the king, “that is true. Run on and inform Her Majesty I am hastening to her.”

This attack was, however, slight, and never rose to the height of frenzy; the principal symptoms which His Majesty showed were great restlessness and incessant chatter, which occasionally lasted for hours, and which was bereft of all coherency. In three months he was considered quite restored, and was not again afflicted with this dreadful malady until the year 1788.

During these three and twenty years, full of party warfare, national peril, and important political changes, the private life of the king was not without some interesting events. Children were born to him, alliances were made by

his family, and death removed some of those nearest his heart. But amongst these latter, William, Duke of Cumberland, the king's uncle, who shuffled off the mortal coil in 1765, cannot be reckoned. This prince, popularly known as 'Billy the Butcher,' was at one time the best hated man in England, but, retiring from public life, he outlived his unpopularity.

In youth he had been fierce and cruel, in the last years of his life hard-hearted and licentious. He had lost Fontenoy, a battle which cost the English nation ten thousand lives; had surrendered Hanover to Marshal d'Estrées; had been taunted by his father with having ruined him and disgraced himself; had introduced the 'Bloody Mutiny Bill;' and had sneered at the death of his brother, Frederick, Prince of Wales. He had had a paralytic stroke, had undergone severe surgical operations for a wound in his leg which he had received at Dettingen, had suffered from gout, and had grown almost blind. He died suddenly on October 31, his last words being, 'It is all over.' His remains were conducted to Westminster Abbey with great pomp and state, and many external signs of a woe remarkable

for its absence, and laid in the vault with his late Sacred Majesty. A few days after the funeral, the young king commanded that 'Much Ado about Nothing' should be played, when many wicked persons thought the title had a suggestive reference to a late solemn event.

In this year, William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, the favourite brother of the king, made a marriage which was regarded by His Majesty as a *mésalliance*. At this period, the duke had just arrived at his twenty-first year. As a youth, he had been notably dull; as a man, he was regarded as not being particularly bright, and was, moreover, wholly devoid even of that spare share of talents sufficient to render a prince clever in the eyes of gracious courtiers. In character, however, he was staid, and far more respectable than his brothers of York or Cumberland, and it was noted that he had many traits in common with the king.

Before he had attained his majority, this susceptible prince lost his heart to Maria, widow of James, second Earl of Waldegrave; one of the most beautiful and fascinating women of the day. This lady was one of the three daughters

of Sir Edward Walpole and of Mrs. Clement, a milliner, on whose union the Church had never been asked to pronounce a nuptial benediction. The triple offspring were, however, fair to see, and married well, one becoming the spouse of the Hon. Frederick Keppel, afterwards the Right Rev. Bishop of Exeter; the second marrying Lionel, fifth Earl of Dysart; and the third, my Lord Waldegrave, who, at the time of her marriage, was old enough to be her father. My lord, however, considerably died whilst his lady was yet young and passing fair, leaving her three daughters and the mistress of a considerable fortune. At an early period of her widowhood, she attracted many suitors, the most favoured of whom was for a time the Duke of Portland; when, however, a prince appeared upon the scene, the subject was dismissed, for my lady was ambitious, and a suitor, of the blood royal, must have no rivals. The prince's frequent visits to her receptions became the talk of the town.

‘The Duke of Gloucester has professed a passion for the dowager Waldegrave,’ writes Gilly Williams in 1764. ‘He is never from her

elbow. This flatters Horry Walpole not a little, though he pretends to dislike it.'

The fact was that Horace Walpole, her uncle, did dislike the attentions the royal duke openly paid her, and pointed out the improbabilities of his marrying her, or, if he were willing to do so, of his obtaining the king's consent. Lady Waldegrave was a woman of the world, and, seeing the wisdom of her uncle's advice, consented to copy a letter he wrote for her to the duke, in which she begged to decline his further attentions, as she could not hope to be his wife, and could not deign to be his mistress. After this, the duke's visits ceased for a fortnight; they then became more frequent and open than before; the fact was, he had married her at her own house, her chaplain, Dr. Norton, performing the ceremony. The duke then made her promise not to own the marriage even to her father, upon any consideration in the world, without his permission. That permission was withheld six years.

My lady kept her word faithfully, refusing to satisfy her family as to her condition; but yet living on such open terms with the duke,

and in such a manner, that satisfied them of her marriage. The houses, or lodgings, which she took near the palaces in which he resided, were freely furnished from the royal wardrobe. She was covered with jewels; her liveries were changed to a compound between her late husband's and royalty. The prince's gentlemen handed her to her chair in public; his coaches carried her home; and finally, Their Majesties continued to receive her at Court, for reasons of their own.

‘The king and queen,’ says Walpole, ‘certainly intended it should be supposed Lady Waldegrave was the duke’s mistress. The world interpreted it in a contrary sense, in compliment to the queen’s virtue, who, on that occasion, wished her virtue might be thought more accommodating.’

Not satisfied with this, Lady Waldegrave became more anxious to show the world she was kin with royalty. She had obtained apartments in the inner court at Hampton, and demanded permission of the Lord Chamberlain to drive her coach into it, an honour preserved to the royal family alone. My Lord Chamber-

lain, after some hesitation, spoke to the king, who peremptorily refused her the honour, on which she indignantly threw up her lodgings, and retired from Hampton.

The king and the princess dowager were indignant at the duke's ambiguous conduct, but it was not until six years after his marriage, when his wife became pregnant, that the weak-minded duke found courage to confess his union. As the duke's heirs came within the line of succession to the throne, it was deemed advisable that the great officers of the State might be present at the birth. The duke, therefore, wrote to the king, to notify his marriage and the condition of the duchess, of which letter no notice was taken.

The king was surly and highly indignant; he would have been satisfied if the duke had not decided on making his alliance public, and was yet, according to Lord Hertford, afraid of quarrelling with him. The duchess said His Majesty 'seems not to have enough of courage to be angry with the duke, but he will wound him in the dark, though he dare do no more.'

The duke behaved with more firmness than

was expected. He told Lord Rochford, the secretary of state, that he would demand the attendance of the Privy Council, for the satisfaction of the nation.

‘The king,’ he added, ‘may, if he pleases, forbid their coming; but I will summon them, and they shall answer it, at their peril, to the nation, if they refuse. I married like a boy, but I will defend my marriage like a man. Out of respect to the king, I concealed it; to satisfy him and the nation, I must now authenticate it; and, if His Majesty does not forthwith take the necessary steps for verifying it, I myself will summon the House of Lords; will go there myself, and in person beseech the House to press the king for despatch.’

He then wrote to His Majesty a second time, when the king sent a message that his marriage would be inquired into after the birth of the child; on this, the duke begged that the examination might take place at once. Accordingly, the Lord Chancellor and two other lords were despatched to the duke’s residence, where they were received by the duke and duchess, the lord bishop of Exeter, and two men learned

in the law, named Lee and Dunning. After various inquiries and attestations, the three wise lords retired; a council was afterwards held, and finally, His Majesty graciously inclined to countenance the marriage, and the officers of the State attended on the duchess when she gave birth to the Princess Sophia Matilda.

Though the king acknowledged the marriage, he by no means looked on the duke or duchess with favour. The latter he indeed regarded as a wily woman who had entrapped a prince not over-wise into a union beneath his rank. He declared he never could think 'of placing her in a situation to answer her extreme pride and vanity;' nor could he receive her at Court 'without affronting all the sovereigns of Europe by countenancing a *mésalliance*.' His brother's conduct he stigmatised as disgraceful, and we find him writing to Lord North 'on the subject of this duke, my heart was wounded.'

But, notwithstanding the tender condition of this organ, his economical Majesty refused later on to provide for his brother's children, but he finally behaved towards them with kindness and generosity. Though the duke had risked much

for the sake of his gracious lady, yet before his death he went the way of most princes, and loved another woman, Lady Almeria Carpenter, lady of the bed-chamber to his duchess. Reference to this domestic scandal is made in one of Horace Walpole's letters. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall also, in his memoirs, says Lady Almeria, 'one of the most beautiful women of her time, but one to whom Nature had been sparing of intellectual attractions, reigned at Gloucester House. The duchess remained its nominal mistress, but Lady Almeria constituted its ornament and its pride.' This siren caused the duchess such annoyance, that a separation between husband and wife was agreed to in 1787. The duke died in 1803.

Another marriage took place in the royal family in 1766 in the person of Caroline Matilda, the king's youngest sister. In the month of October in this year, when fifteen years old, this princess became the wife of Christian VII., King of Denmark. 'She had been kept in her nursery,' says the author of the 'Memoirs of the Reign of George III.,' 'till sent to Copenhagen; had had no company but servants, and could have seen nothing but an intimacy with Lord Bute,

which all the princess's children spoke of with disgust ; and could have heard nothing but passionate lamentations from the princess on the impotence of power possessed by English sovereigns—lessons that seem to have made but too deep impression on the inexperienced young Queen of Denmark when she came to have a lover, and be mistress of absolute power.'

This young princess, whose union with the King of Denmark was arranged through state policy, was amiable, beautiful, and accomplished, to make use of a journalistic phrase of the time ; whilst her husband was known to be a weak-minded, graceless libertine. All England looked forward to the marriage as one destined to bring but slight happiness to the princess, whilst she herself, as the time drew near for her departure, became depressed and anxious. Her forebodings were soon destined to be realised, and the short history of her life and early death form one of the most interesting chapters in history.

The king was little more than sixteen at this period, but, though young in years, he was already far advanced in vice. In figure he was diminutive, in appearance he bore a strong re-

semblance to his grandfather, George II., whose complexion and white eyes he inherited. His court was ruled by Juliana Maria, the queen dowager, whose desire it was to secure the throne for her son, Prince Frederick, and who subsequently became the prime cause of the young queen's disgrace and misery. When Caroline Matilda arrived in Denmark, her bridegroom cousin took an aversion to her which strengthened with time. After two years of married life, during which she was subjected to many gross humiliations by her husband's unconcealed amours, he left the kingdom in order to visit England, and some other European countries. By the Court of St. James's he was received with some show of coldness, but by the nobility he was sumptuously entertained and studiously courted, notwithstanding that he spent his nights in drinking and dissipation, in the purlieus of St. Giles's, disguised as a sailor.

Indeed, he made no decent concealment of his lack of morals, as a crowded audience at Drury Lane noted on the occasion of his witnessing the play of the 'Provoked Husband.'

In the comedy, the good old institution of marriage is continually ridiculed, and at every passage sneering at the ceremony, the little profligate clapped his royal hands in hearty approbation of such sentiments. A few nights later, a crowded house had the benefit of seeing him lying fast asleep in the royal box during the performance of 'Jane Shore.' Charming Mrs. Bellamy played Alicia, and, offended at this glaring instance of princely neglect, determined to rouse the sleeping king; she, therefore, when opportunity permitted, approached the royal box, which was close to the stage, and in a tone so loud that it reached almost to a shriek, exclaimed, 'Oh! thou false lord:' whereon the king awoke in sudden alarm, and swore he would not have a woman with a voice like that as his wife for all the world could give.

His profligacy was, however, no drawback to his popularity, and he was enthusiastically received as the husband of an English princess.

'The King of Denmark,' writes the queen to Lord Harcourt, 'does amuse himself with plays, operas, balls, assemblies, and seeing the beauty

of the country of England. This latter part, I must confess, I do envy him.'

Before leaving, the little king, in return for the great civility shown him, gave a masquerade ball held at the Opera House, at which two thousand five hundred persons were present; 'the greatest number of nobility and gentry ever assembled together upon any occasion of the like nature,' as the *Annual Register* remarks. The jewels worn at this entertainment were estimated to be worth two millions of money. The Opera House was most brilliantly illuminated; the various costumes of the guests magnificent, and the whole entertainment a vast success. The king and queen sat in a box, looking gravely on at the immense parti-coloured throng moving in the wide area beneath, where His Danish Majesty danced with the charming Duchess of Ancaster, and where blacks and punchinellos, Moorish maidens and grim Turks, together with many heroes and heroines of all times and climes, made up a dazzling spectacle. Towards the close of the night, a noble duke had the misfortune to lose a snuff-box in the crowd, on the lid of which was a

portrait of the French king, set in diamonds; the finder of the valuable article was so pleased with it that it was never returned to its rightful owner, though a sum of 'fifty guineas, and no questions asked' was offered for its restoration.

This magnificent ball was, however, surpassed by an entertainment given the king by the Prince de Condé at Chantilly, which, says the *Annual Register*, 'continued three days and three nights; during which there was an open house kept for all comers and goers, without exception. There was likewise a most grand hunt in the Forest of Chantilly by candle-light. After a wild boar had been chased for a good while, he was killed by a nobleman with a bow and arrow.

When Christian VII. returned to his Court, he was accompanied by a physician, named Struensee, whom he had met at Ahrensburg, adopted as a special favourite, and readily induced to accompany him to Denmark. Struensee was one of those brilliant adventurers who flash, meteor-like, through courtly spheres for a season, and whose career generally terminates in downfall and ignominy. Nature

had given him a handsome person, brilliant talents, ready tact, and great grace of manner; and, with these good gifts, he now determined to win his way to rank and power. He was already high in favour with the king, and in a little while he succeeded in winning the confidence of the queen. In her husband's absence from the Court, she had commenced to interest herself in politics, to the annoyance of the queen dowager; and, on the return of the king, she was by no means desirous of laying aside the influence she had, meanwhile, gained. Struensee entered into her schemes with great readiness, and the king's physician and favourite was soon elevated to the rank of prime minister of Denmark.

Struensee, however, not only succeeded in gaining the young queen's confidence, but in winning her love likewise; a fact which neither of them took much pains to conceal, and which soon became one of the scandals of the Court. Her conduct visibly changed; she became graciously indifferent to her husband's amours, surrounded herself by perpetual gaiety, and introduced a new costume to society, consist-

ing of a slouched hat, black frock, and buckskin under-garments, in which she continually appeared in public, whether walking, driving, or riding. Sir Robert Murray Keith, the British minister at Copenhagen, mentions in his memoirs that, during his stay in Denmark, he 'never saw the queen in any other garb.'

Her open gallantries with her handsome physician and prime minister gave as much offence to the ladies of her Court, as the sudden elevation of the brilliant adventurer to position and power afforded the Danish nobles. The press denounced him, public opinion was inflamed, and the dowager queen saw that the moment was ripe for their downfall. With one stroke she might be able to rid the kingdom not only of Struensee, but the queen; prove her children illegitimate; and see her beloved Prince Frederick once more heir to the crown. For the execution of this scheme, tact and boldness were necessary; nor were they found wanting when needed.

The night selected for the downfall of the queen and her favourite was one on which a magnificent masked ball was held in the palace

of Copenhagen. The king, queen, and their attendants entered the ball-room at ten o'clock; the handsome, brilliant Struensee was there already, and Her Majesty danced with him through the greater part of the night. She then went to supper, where she remained until three o'clock in the morning with a gay and select circle of friends, at which hour both she and Struensee retired. The time had now arrived when those who had entered into the conspiracy of the queen dowager must act. Accordingly one of her abettors named Rantzau, went to the king's chamber, woke him, and told him, with much agitation, that there was a conspiracy on foot against his crown and life, at the head of which were the queen and Struensee; he was, moreover, informed that his sole means of saving himself was by signing a warrant for their arrest, which was then produced. The king, startled from his sleep, was bewildered and shocked, but hesitated signing the order, upon which the queen dowager and Prince Frederick rushed into his room, and, repeating the same story, besought His Majesty to have the queen and prime minister arrested.

The king no longer deliberated, and Struensee was seized in bed and hurried to the citadel, from whence he was soon after conducted to the scaffold, after making a full confession of his intimacy with the queen.

Meanwhile Her Majesty was awakened by one of her female attendants to receive a mandate ordering her to quit the palace. In a moment she understood the situation in which she was placed, and conscious that, if she could but gain access to the king, she would overcome her enemies, she hastily rose, and, putting on only her petticoat and shoes, rushed towards His Majesty's apartments. In the ante-chamber, however, she encountered Rantzau, seated quietly in a chair, when, remembering her half-clad condition, she hastily ran back to her bed-room, and, putting on some clothes, once more made her way to her husband's chamber. Rantzau was not there; his place had been taken by an officer, who forbade her further approach. She at once seized him by the hair, and, demanding to see the king, pushed him aside and advanced to the door. Here two soldiers with crossed firelocks offered her fur-

ther opposition. She commanded them to let her go by; they both fell on their knees and said, 'Our heads are answerable if we allow your Majesty to pass.'

The queen, being a woman of determination and courage, without hesitation, jumped over their crossed muskets, and ran towards the corridor leading to the king's apartment, into which she finally forced her way, to find he had been removed by her enemies, who feared her intention, and had baffled its fulfilment. Exhausted and dejected, she returned to her rooms, where Struensee's white bear-skin cloak was found, and from whence, in the early dawn of a January morning, she was hurried to the Castle of Cronenburg, a fortress situated about twenty miles from the capital; and here, for the next four months, she remained, tortured by the uncertainty of the fate her enemies held in store for her.

In the last journals of Horace Walpole, a glimpse is given of Danish Court life.

'The queen, Struensee, and Brandt (who aided and abetted Struensee, and shared his ignominious fate) had acted like mad people,'

says the biographer. 'They certainly gave the king laudanum frequently; and yet, if he did not go to bed so soon after supper as they chose, Brandt used to kick him out of the room. Other instances appeared, on the trial, of similar indignity. Sir Robert Keith, after his return, owned to a person from whom I had it that the junto certainly had meant, by drugs, to hurt the king's understanding The queen subsequently confessed her intrigue with Struensee, and signed that confession. When the counsellor who was to defend her, went to receive her orders, she laughed, and told him the story was true.'

Meantime, the revolution and imprisonment of the queen caused a vast sensation in England. In Denmark, articles were being framed against her for the purpose of proving her children illegitimate, and probably of bringing her to the block, when Sir Robert Keith was instructed to intervene, his interference, moreover, being backed up by the appearance of a powerful British squadron in the Baltic. These measures had the desired effect on the Court of Denmark. The queen was at once

liberated from the fortress, and, escorted by the British squadron, she sailed to Stade, in Hanover, from whence she was conducted to the Castle of Zell, the place where the ill-fated Sophia Dorothea, wife of George I., had spent thirty years of gloomy captivity. It was not, however, rendered a prison to Denmark's queen; she was surrounded by a small Court, with whom she quickly became a favourite; saw her friends, and found time to enter into a conspiracy for her restoration to her throne. Death, however, frustrated this project; three years after her departure from Denmark, she died in the twenty-third year of her age.

When news of the revolution which displaced the queen from her throne reached England, the princess dowager was fast approaching her last end. All her life she had been a woman of determination and courage, and now, when at death's door, these traits did not depart from her. For three months she had suffered from a cancer in her throat, but she refused to let anyone examine it, save a German page, who acted as surgeon, and the only medicine she would

use was hemlock. Knowing that death was near, she had sent for her eldest daughter, the Princess of Brunswick ; but neither to her, nor to any other member of her family, did she in any way allude to her approaching demise, or even acknowledge her danger. Scarcely able to speak from weakness, she received visitors, and once, a few days before her death, on reading in the newspapers a statement of her perilous condition, she at once ordered her coach, and drove through the streets, in order to disguise the real state of her health. That she was, at the same time, fully conscious of her approaching end there can be no doubt, from the fact that the Princess of Brunswick, on entering her mother's room suddenly, found her reading a book, which she hastily hid under her couch. When she afterwards left the apartment, the princess looked at the work, and found it 'A Preparation for Death.' After hearing of her youngest daughter's imprisonment, she scarcely took any nourishment but cordials, and grew gradually weaker. Two days before her death, she had an interview that lasted a couple of hours with Lord Bute, who had continued

her friend and adviser to the last; when he called next day, the king being there, she refused to see him.

Their Majesties had called to pay her their usual weekly visit an hour before their regular time; hearing they had arrived, she rose, dressed, and would have walked to meet them, but the Princess of Brunswick ran out and called in the king and queen. They remained with her until ten o'clock, when she went to bed. A couple of women and her page sat with her during the night; at half-past six next morning, not hearing her breathe, the page softly drew the bed-curtains, and saw that the princess was dead. This was on February 8, 1772.

For twenty years since the death of her husband, she had enjoyed the revenue of £64,000 a year, and though she lived in privacy, and with strict economy, she, to the surprise of all, left behind her but £27,000, which was found in one of her cabinets. It then obtained universal belief that she had given the vast sum she was previously supposed to have hoarded to Lord Bute; and this belief gained ground when

it was remembered he had purchased an estate in Bedfordshire for £114,000, had built a house there, which he had furnished in a magnificent and costly manner, and furthermore erected a mansion in town, at a time when he had no visible source of wealth, or estate, and his wife's inheritance being so tied up that it was impossible for him to raise money on it.

Even His Majesty was not without having his suspicion as to the source of Lord Bute's wealth. Some years previously the dowager had given him the library of her late husband, Frederick, Prince of Wales, to which she had no testamentary right. Lord Bute, however, had the books quietly removed before any knowledge of the affair came to His Majesty's ears. The king, when made aware of the gift, was justly incensed, and, though Lord Bute offered to restore it, declined on the ground that he 'should not be the first to proclaim to the world that his mother had done wrong.' When, however, the Bedfordshire estate was purchased, His Majesty, according to Huish, significantly said to his mother's favourite, 'Take care, my lord, that the people do not

say you got your riches from the same quarter as you got your books.'

The princess had been the best hated woman in her son's kingdom, and public rancour was kept up till the tomb closed over her remains. But a few days before her death a paragraph went the round of the papers which stated that 'fifty guineas were yesterday offered and refused to insure one hundred pounds on the life of a certain great lady in Pall Mall, for two months only ; and five offered at the same time and refused to underwrite her for three days.' Nor was this all. As the funeral procession moved through the streets from Carlton House to Westminster Abbey, the mob huzzaed for delight, and forcibly stripped the black cloth from the platform at the abbey, before half the procession had passed across. It is more extraordinary yet to record that the soldiers on guard, lest they should lose their share in the plunder, followed the felonious example of the crowd, and secured for themselves as much of the cloth as they could.

Her income went to the king, and her jewels, plate, and trinkets to her remaining children,

who could not agree as to the adequate division of these precious mementoes, and therefore sent them down to Christie's in Pall Mall, where they were sold by public auction for the benefit of their joint owners.

CHAPTER V.

The King's Brother, Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland—Remarkable Intrigue—Lord Grosvenor's Courtship—The Royal Lover and his Amorous Letters—The Countess's Reply—Royal Marriage Bill—The King and Queen at Kew—The Prince and Perdita Robinson—The Meeting at Old Kew by Moonlight—The Duchess of Cumberland courts Popularity—Midnight Revelry at Lord Chesterfield's—Charles Fox—The Charming Duchess of Devonshire and the Westminster Election—Mrs. Crouch and Mrs. Belington.

THE king's third brother, Henry Frederick, created Duke of Cumberland a short time after the demise of his grand-uncle, 'Billy the Butcher,' was destined to give his royal mother more trouble, and the nation more scandal, than either the Dukes of York or Gloucester. In appearance, he had the advantage of his brothers; in intellect he did not surpass their dull level; in stature he was small; and in

habits, degraded. This is the prince concerning whom a writer in the daily press declared he would not say any more just then; 'for to reproach a man with being an idiot is an insult to God,' said this religious scribe. From the strict confinement in which he had been kept until he had obtained his majority, he sallied forth to satiate himself with reckless vice, and bring ridicule and disgrace upon his name and family. The morals and manners of the age, and the proverbial frailty of princes would not perhaps have rendered his coarse amours in any way notorious, had he not engaged in an intrigue with the wife of the first Earl Grosvenor, then young and beautiful, witty and accomplished.

My Lord Grosvenor was a gay courtier, and a man of pleasure, who had married Henrietta, daughter of Henry Vernon, of Hilton, in the county of Stafford, esquire. The circumstances under which they met were not without romance, and the manner of his brief wooing was certainly characteristic of the age. My lord was walking one day in Kensington Gar-

dens, whilst his coach waited for him at the gate, when, a sudden summer shower coming on, he took refuge in an alcove, where Miss Vernon and her sister likewise sought refuge. My lord was gallant by nature, and addressed the ladies; they were most courteously inclined, and made reply, and their conversation ended by his lordship requesting them to do him the honour of sharing his carriage, as the rain continued, which they, nothing loath, consented to do. In riding back to town, his lordship became attentive to the elder of the ladies, and she, not to be behindhand in paying him a compliment, after the fashion of the day, said his lordship's coach was the easiest she ever rode in, to which he replied he 'was vastly happy at its meeting with her approbation, and that she might be the mistress of it whenever she pleased.' The lady blushed, the lord became more amorous of her beauty, and next day called on her parents, and made proposals for her hand, when the pair were duly married. My lady bore my lord four children; and all went well until Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, came upon

the domestic scene, and professed to admire her ladyship vastly.

Flattered by the passing admiration of a prince of the royal blood, the countess listened to his protestations of love, and was quickly lured to ruin and disgrace, which her husband—a worthless profligate—did not hesitate in exposing to the publicity of a divorce court. Their letters were produced at the trial, ‘and never,’ says Horace Walpole, ‘was the public regaled with a collection of greater folly! Yet, to the lady’s honour be it said, that bathing a few oaths, which sounded more masculine than tender, the advantage in grammar, spelling, and style was all in her favour. His Royal Highness’s diction and learning scarce exceeded that of a cabin boy!’

The records of this remarkable case have been preserved among the celebrated trials of the period, and throw no inconsiderable light on the duke’s character, as well as on the manners of the times.

The royal lover’s remarkable epistles were addressed to ‘My dear little Angel,’ and ‘My ever dearest Love.’ Passing over some strong

sentiments, the countess is apostrophised in language that rises almost to the height of poesy, as, 'Thou dearest angel of my soul!' Then the princely youth exclaims, 'O, that I could but bear your pain for you, I should be happy,' and adds, in language common to all lovers of other men's wives, then and now, 'What grieves me most' (is) 'that they who ought to feel, don't know the inestimable prize, the treasure they have in you.' In another of these effusions, the amorous duke tells my lady, 'I got to supper about nine o'clock, but I could not eat, and so got to bed about ten. I then prayed for you, my dearest love, kissed your dearest little hair, and laid down and dreamt of you; had you on the dear little couch ten thousand times in my arms, kissing you, and telling you how much I loved and admired you, and you seemed pleased. But, alas! when I woke, I found it all delusion; nobody by me but myself—at sea O, my love, mad and happy beyond myself to tell you how I love you, and have thought of you ever since I have been separated from you.'

He then quotes some lines from Prior about

amorous flames, beauteous eyes, the pangs of absence, and such-like subjects, which poets true, and lovers ardent, delight in discoursing, and finally closes the letter from which these extracts have been taken with the following rather incoherent, but remarkable expressions: 'God bless you! I shan't forget you. God knows you have told me so before. I have your heart, and it is warm in my breast. I hope mine feels as easy to you, thou joy of my life. Adieu.'

These letters were written at a time when Lady Grosvenor was about to give birth to a child—a situation that did not, however, by any means prevent her replying to her lover. It happened that one day her lord met a servant going to post one of her pure love epistles, directed under cover to Mrs. Reda, a milliner, who made herself and her house useful in various delightful ways to lovers in distress. My lord, who had become suspicious, opened the letter and read it. In the next effusion written by her ladyship to her royal lover, some reference is made to this unforeseen accident.

'He,' she commences, referring to her lawful

lord and master, 'appears rather in better temper to-day, so I'm in great hopes he did not get enough of the Letter to make out much. He stayed out very late last night, which seems to have occasioned a *weezing* to-day. By means of my sisters, I think I can send and receive my letters very safe for the future. Carry,' continues the letter, 'is out of Town for a few days, so in the meantime I send them by another sister, who comes to see me every day, and she thinks it some business I have with Reda about some *Millenary* that I don't chuse he should know of; so, if she gets ever a Letter for me, she knows she is not to take it out of her pocket till we are alone. So it's all cleverly settled . . . I resume my pen to tell you to-day how sincerely I esteem you. He is still rather more come about again to-day. Yesterday he shook hands with me, and this morning he came and kissed me, and said he was going out of Town to Walthamstow, to Dine with his Brother; perhaps he is gone to ask his advice, but I don't care; he may take what measures he pleases with me, if you will but love me. I had a note from Mrs. Reda this evening; she

says she is certain he dares not say a word to her, but she wishes he would above all things, for that she knows very well how to answer him, for that she knows enough of his Intrigues for him to be afraid of saying anything to her, and she is sure he is not *assez Hardi* to say a word to her upon the subject . . . I hope I shall be in London when you come back ; I dare say I shall. I fancy he had not a mind to part with me, let him have seen what he would in ye Letter, for he asked me Yesterday when I should be able to go into Cheshire. I told him I coo'd not give the least guess, as it depended entirely upon how I was, and I think I've laid a good scheme ; for I've already complained I've got a pain in my side, and I intend to say it's much worse at the end of the month, and that I can't bear the motion of a carriage. It will, I really believe, be a very good plan, for, if I said I had a Feaver, or anything of that kind, a physician would know by my Pulse I had not, and might discover me to him. And, besides, this will be a more lasting complaint ; so at the end of five or six weeks I'll grow very ill, and send for Fordyce the Apothecary, and make

him send me a quantity of nasty draughts, which I'll throw out of the Window. Only think how wicked I am, for in reality I'm already as strong and as well as ever I was in my life . . . O my dearest soul, I've just received Two the dearest letters in the World from you. How can I, I cannot express my feelings of gratitude and Love for you ; your dear heart is so safe with me, and feels every motion mine does, with you. How sweet those verses are you sent me ; they are heavenly sweet because they were remarked by you. I always liked Prior, but shall adore him because you like him. Your dear little heart is flurried, too, on reading ye dear letters ; it has both laught and cry'd with Joy. It lies warm in my breast ; I cherish it, and think of nothing else but to preserve it safe there and happy. My dearest soul, I send you ten thousand kisses ; I wish I could give them.'

My lady finishes this amorous epistle by abandoning the colder English language for the more expressive French, and bursts out,

'Amons tout Jour Tendrement, mon adorable ammi, mon tres chère ame.'

Besides meeting Lady Grosvenor at many places of assignation in London, he followed her to Eaton Hall, and took up his residence at one of the nearest public-houses, that he might be near her. On these occasions he donned a disguise which was afterwards described in the evidence as consisting of 'a brownish wig which came low over his ears and down upon his forehead, with a handkerchief round his neck, a blue and white flannel waistcoat, and lightish drab coat.'

The duke was known, whilst here, as 'the squire,' and was accompanied by two companions, one of whom was called Farmer Tush, the other simply John, as became one supposed to exercise the calling of a groom. It may be added that all three were mistaken for highwaymen by the mistress of the 'Toll House,' where they stayed, at Marford Hill, and also by her attendants. This opinion was likewise shared by those at the inn at Barnhill, which the duke and his friends honoured by their presence, and was strengthened by the fact of one James Parker, servant at the latter-mentioned house of entertainment for man and beast, notic-

ing that his disguised Royal Highness fell asleep at his breakfast, from which the shrewd fellow argued he had been awake all night.

At last my Lord Grosvenor's suspicions were, what the newspapers call, awakened, and his brother, together with John Stephens, adjutant of the Cheshire militia, were requested to watch the lady's movements. This they did to such good effect that the duke and her ladyship were discovered at the 'White Hart Inn,' at St. Albans. A divorce suit followed, and, notwithstanding that the duke's not over-wise counsel pleaded—to the great amusement of the court—that, however aggravating the circumstances were otherwise, they could not charge his Royal Highness with intriguing merely for the sake of intrigue, as the *incoherency* of his letters plainly proved him to be really a lover,' my Lord Grosvenor was awarded the sum of £10,000 damages, by way of healing the wounded honour of his house. This was an amount which the royal duke found it inconvenient to pay; and, eight months after the trial, the king writes to the then premier, Lord North,

‘My brothers have this day applied about the means of paying the Duke of Cumberland’s damages and costs, which, if not payed this day se’nnight, the proctors will certainly force the house; which, at this licentious time, will occasion reflections on the rest of the family. Whatever can be done, ought to be done.’

But, alas for the faith of princes; the divorce suit had scarcely commenced, when the gallant duke, tired of his amour with his ‘ever dearest little angel,’ turned away from her, and commenced a new intrigue; whilst the ex-countess, some years afterwards, entered once more into the bonds of holy matrimony with General George Porter, who was Member of Parliament for Stockbridge.

The object of the prince’s fresh fancy was the wife of a city merchant, an extremely handsome woman, with a conveniently placid spouse. Indeed, Horace Walpole says, ‘it was uncertain which was most proud of the honour, the husband or the wife.’ His Royal Highness accompanied the lady to all places of public amusement, and showed her the most gracious courtesy; but quickly deserted her for Mrs.

Horton, at whose shrine he now offered his passionate devotions. Mrs. Horton was the daughter of Lord Irnham, who afterwards became Earl of Carhampton; she had in early life married a wealthy husband, whom death untimely snatched from her. She was a lady of quality, worldly, ambitious, and pretty, with large, languishing eyes that dealt indiscriminate misery and happiness to her admirers, and bewitching manners that exerted universal fascination. Moreover, she was vastly accomplished; gave vent to wit and sarcasm with equal ease, and preserved her virtue intact. The result of the duke's passion for her was that he offered to make her his wife, an honour she unhesitatingly accepted. They were, therefore, married at Mrs. Horton's residence, in Hertford Street, Mayfair, on October 2, 1771.

The next day, the duke went to the king with a letter in his pocket, containing an avowal of his union, which he presented to His Majesty, after walking with him for some time in the garden. The king quietly slipped it into his pocket, saying,

‘I suppose I need not read it now?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied the duke, ‘you must read it directly.’

His Majesty then read it, and great was his royal wrath. ‘You fool! You blockhead! You villain!’ he broke out; and then followed some words of advice which the world would not call virtuous. Better, His Majesty inferred, that the duke should multiply his late experiences a thousand-fold than have married a subject.

‘This woman,’ he said, referring to the new-made duchess, ‘can be nothing—she never shall be anything.’

The duke was frightened at this storm, and asked what was His Gracious Majesty’s royal will. ‘Go abroad,’ said the king.

The duke and his wife, therefore, immediately crossed to Calais.

His Majesty’s indignation was terrible, but was exceeded by that of the princess dowager. The duke’s scandal with Lady Grosvenor they could have forgiven, but a legal marriage with a subject was an offence rank indeed in the eyes of royalty, so much so that the dowager

declared she would never see him again, and never did, though this erring son waited on her a few days before her death. The king to mark his anger had word sent him that he was not to appear at Court. The duke, happy in the thought that no further measures would be taken against him, led a merry life; gave some balls in Calais; travelled under a feigned name through France and Flanders, and finally returned to his London residence, Cumberland House.

His Majesty refused to see him, the guards were withdrawn, the Lord Chamberlain intimated that whoever visited the duke or duchess must not appear at Court, and the same message was given to the foreign ministers. The effect was that the bride and bridegroom found themselves deserted except by the duchess's family, and the ambitious lady was, according to Horace Walpole, 'forced to bestow her hand to be kissed by her menial servants.' They soon retired to their residence in the great park at Windsor, and afterwards passed some years on the Continent. A little later on, this weak and licentious man used the cruellest possible means

of revenging himself on the king for the indignities shown him, due record of which will be mentioned.

So mortified was His Majesty by the marriages of his brothers to commoners that he resolved to prevent such an occurrence from taking place again in his family. He therefore speedily framed a message, which was delivered to both Houses of Parliament, informing them that, 'being desirous, from paternal affection to his own family, and anxious concern for the future welfare of his people, and the honour and dignity of his Crown, that the right of approving all marriages in the Royal Family (which ever has belonged to the kings of this realm as a matter of public concern) may be made effectual, recommends to both Houses of Parliament to take into their serious consideration whether it may not be wise and expedient to supply the defect of the laws now in being, and, by some new provision, more effectually to guard the descendants of his late Majesty, King George II. (other than the issue of princesses who have married or may hereafter marry into foreign families) from marrying without the approba-

tion of His Majesty, his heirs and successors, first had and obtained.'

Walpole says that the message was 'received with the utmost coldness and disgust by both Houses. It not only set out with a falsehood (the assertion of the king's power over such marriages), but contradicted itself by devising a remedy for the very deficiency of that power.' However, a marriage bill drawn up in accordance to the desire of the arbitrary royal message by Lord Mansfield, though powerfully attacked by Charles James Fox, Burke, and Wedderburn, passed on April 1, 1772.

Meanwhile the king's domestic life glided placidly by; it was only when dressed in the trappings of royalty that he assumed the regal character, which never sat easily on his shoulders, just as some poor player in velvet garb and tinsel crown, struts with an air majestic for a couple of hours before the footlights. When the affairs of state were laid aside, no one could be more simple in manners, more dull and decorous in habits, more exemplary as a husband and a father. Between the years 1762 and 1783, fifteen children were born to the royal

pair, and Kew House was selected as the nursery for this too prolific progeny. Here the king and queen led a life new to monarchs, the simple details of which are given in many memoirs of the day.

At six in the morning their Majesties rose, read, or walked about the grounds, sat down to breakfast at eight with the eldest of the children, at nine all the progeny were brought into the room for general inspection, when the elder members were sent to their daily tasks, and the younger to play in the gardens. Occasionally the king and queen, attended by such of the family as were able to walk, marched two and two round the grounds in solemn and stately procession, after which the royal parents saw the little ones dine. Their Majesties' own dinner was of the plainest, the king living principally on vegetables, the queen confining herself to a couple of dishes, both of them drinking but little wine. When a levée or council was to be held, the king rode into town on horseback, and returned as quickly as possible from the cares of state to the joys of domesticity. In the evenings he read selections from sermons or theo-

logical works to his consort, which Her Sacred Majesty listened to with reverent complacency, as she knitted or sewed, and took huge pinches of snuff; then the gay pair said their prayers and went to bed betimes, and so the day was done.

One of the wicked wags who lived and made ballads at this time celebrates the domestic felicity of their right homely and sacred Majesties in these verses—

‘Cæsar the mighty king who sway’d
The sceptre, was a sober blade;
A leg of mutton and his wife
Were the chief comforts of his life.

‘The queen, compos’d of different stuff,
Above all things ador’d her snuff,
Save gold, which, in her great opinion,
Alone could rival snuff’s dominion.’

At Kew the king was enabled to indulge his harmless craze for agriculture, which now exceeded his recent passion for the making of buttons; a species of regal industry and mechanism which filled the breast of his consort and the royal household with inexpressible wonder and admiration. ‘Farmer George,’ as he was called, superintended the tilling and sowing of

his acres, and sent their produce into market with a careful eye to remuneration. At an early stage of their lives, he had trained his two eldest sons to till a small plot of land, and sow it with corn, which in good time they reaped, thrashed, saw ground to flour, and made into bread.

The second son, Frederick, created, after the death of his uncle, Duke of York, was, when six months old, made Bishop of Osnaburgh. The bishopric, which was a secular dignity with an ecclesiastical designation, had been held open for three years, in order that it might be bestowed on one of the king's sons. The revenue which this juvenile 'Right Reverend Father in God,'—as he was styled by an ordained and foolish sycophant who dedicated a book to him,—derived from his office was £2,000 a year until he arrived at the age of eighteen, when, his minorship being at an end, the amount of £25,000 per annum would become his by right divine.

At an early age, the Prince of Wales and the bishop were taken from the nursery and placed under the charge of Lord Holderness, as gover-

nor; the Rev. Dr. Markham, head of Westminster School, as preceptor; and Cyril Jackson as sub-preceptor. Moreover, a royal chaplain was thrown in with the list, whose duty it was to read prayers to the princes daily, and now their education commenced. Dr. Markham had, previous to undertaking his charge, asked His Majesty how he wished to have the future heir to the crown treated, when the king made answer, 'Like the sons of any private English gentleman; if he deserves it, let him be flogged, just as you used to do at Westminster.' The learned doctor, who had strong faith in the efficacy of corporeal punishment, smiled and bowed; and the privilege accorded him was freely made use of, as the royal back of his pupil could testify; for the prince, even at the mature age of ten years, was not easily governed.

Their Royal Highnesses indeed became so refractory, that the governor and preceptors quickly resigned their posts. This Prince of Wales would brook no authority, whilst the young scapegrace, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, ridiculed poor Lord Holderness to his face. In

their places, the Duke of Montague, Bishop Hurd, and Mr. Arnold were named governor, preceptor, and sub-preceptor; but under this goodly trio matters seemed to make small improvement. Dr. Hurd, a pliant, easy-going man, who, 'though a scholar, was only a servile pedant, ignorant of mankind,' as Horace Walpole says, was inclined to let his pupils follow their own wills, and, so long as he continued in this frame of mind, his charge was not troublesome; but once, when he strove to imitate the discipline of Dr. Markham of flogging memory, the princes rebelled, tore the rod from his right reverend hand, and laid the lash upon his episcopal back with hearty good-will.

His Majesty was shocked and grieved that his olive branches had turned out firebrands. The traits of character they displayed thus early in life made him fearful of the future; and, as years went by, the conduct of the princes was not calculated to lessen his fears. The strictest watch was kept upon them, even when they reached the years of manhood; newspapers were forbidden them; they were allowed no communication with youths of their own age; they were

seldom set free even for a few hours from their household confinement, and spies were set to watch them. The result of this system was, as Horace Walpole states in his last journals, that, ‘as soon as the king went to bed, the prince and his brother, Prince Frederick, went to their mistresses.’ It is further mentioned in the same page that the heir to the crown, ‘restricted from the society of women, had contracted a habit of private drinking,’ one result of which was a humour that showed itself in blotches all over his face. ‘Such,’ says the author, ‘were the fruits of his being locked up in this palace of piety.’

When he arrived at the ripe age of eighteen, the prince contracted his first liaison, the object of his love being charming Mary Robinson, famous alike for her beauty and talent. Mrs. Robinson was the daughter of respectable parents, and had been educated by the famous Hannah More. When only fifteen, she married an adventurer who passed himself off as the heir to large estates in South Wales, but who quickly proved himself to be a heartless scoundrel and confirmed profligate. Reduced

by his extravagance to a dependent condition, with but a future prospect of debt and difficulties before her, she resolved to try her success as an actress, and mentioned her design to Brereton, a friend of hers, who was one of the *employés* at Drury Lane play-house. Brereton introduced her to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who had just then purchased a share in the famous theatre. The author of 'The School for Scandal' in turn spoke of her to Garrick, then just retired from the stage, but who, on recognising the dawning talents of fair Mary Robinson, undertook to become her tutor and prepare her for the theatrical profession. After considerable trials and many rehearsals, it was finally decided that she should make her first bow to the public as Juliet. In her interesting memoirs, she has left a brief description of her premier appearance.

'The theatre,' she writes, 'was crowded with fashionable spectators; the green-room and orchestra (where Mr. Garrick sat during the night) were thronged with critics. My dress was a pale pink satin, trimmed with crape, richly spangled with silver; my head was ornamented with white feathers, and my monumental suit,

for the last scene, was white satin and completely plain, except that I wore a veil of the most transparent gauze, which fell quite to my feet from the back of my head, and a string of beads round my waist, to which was suspended a cross appropriately fashioned. When I approached the side wing, my heart throbbed convulsively; I then began to fear my resolution would fail, and I leaned upon the nurse's arm almost fainting. Mr. Sheridan and several other friends encouraged me to proceed, and at length, with trembling limbs and fearful apprehension, I approached the audience.'

Her personation of the love-sick Juliet was a vast success; she had already published some volumes of very pretty verse, and she now appeared on the stage under the distinguished patronage of the brilliant Duchess of Devonshire and David Garrick. Accordingly she soon became the fashion, and her society was sought after by 'ladies of quality' and men of all degrees.

'Were I to mention the names of those who held forth the temptations of fortune at this moment of public peril, I might create some

reproaches in many families of the fashionable world,' she writes. 'Among others who offered most liberally to purchase my indiscretion was the late Duke of Rutland; a settlement of six hundred pounds per annum was proposed as the means of estranging me entirely from my husband. I refused the offer. I had still the consolation of an unsullied name.'

She was in her twenty-third year when the Prince of Wales first saw her at Drury Lane; on which occasion she personated Perdita in 'The Winter's Tale.' The play had been selected by their Gracious Majesties, and the royal family had come to witness the performance. Speaking of this hour, which was so fateful to her, Mary Robinson says,

'As I stood in the wing opposite the prince's box, waiting to go on the stage, Mr. Ford, the manager's son, and now a respectable defender of the laws, presented a friend who accompanied him; this friend was Lord Viscount Malden, now Earl of Essex. We entered into conversation during a few minutes, the Prince of Wales all the time observing us, and frequently speaking to Colonel Lake and to the Hon. Mr. Legge,

who was waiting on His Royal Highness. I hurried through the first scene, not without much embarrassment, owing to the fixed attention with which the Prince of Wales honoured me. Indeed some flattering remarks which were made by His Royal Highness met my ear as I stood near his box, and I was overwhelmed with confusion.

‘The prince’s particular attention was observed by everyone. On the last curtsey, the royal family condescendingly returned a bow to the performers; but, just as the curtain was falling, my eyes met those of the Prince of Wales, and, with a look that I *never shall forget*, he gently inclined his head a second time. I felt the compliment, and blushed my gratitude.’

The prince was at this time handsome, well-made, and graceful in appearance; he has been described as ‘one whose manners were irresistible, and whose smile was victory.’ He was evidently fascinated by the beautiful Perdita, and showed that he was no laggard in love. A couple of days afterwards Lord Essex waited on the lady, and presented her with a note expressive of ardent admiration, written by the

royal hand, and signed 'Florizel,' to which the lady duly replied. This was followed by a correspondence amorous and confidential. Perdita, who had rejected the addresses of a duke, was yet but a woman, and received the avowed adoration of a prince. Before he had spoken a word to her, the heir to the realm sent the actress his portrait set in a case, within which she discovered a small heart (truly emblematic in size of his who had sent it), on one side of which was written, '*Je ne change qu'en mourant*;' on the other, in plain English, 'Unalterable to my Perdita through life.'

It now became the prince's anxiety to arrange a meeting with this siren; but, on account of the strict watch placed on all his movements, this was by no means easy to accomplish. Once he proposed that she should visit him in his apartments disguised in male attire; but this she declined, on account of the danger of detection, and a mutual visit to Lord Essex's house was likewise objected to on the same grounds. At last it was determined they should meet at Kew, and the assignation was not devoid of some of the chief elements of romance;

it took place by moonlight, and was attended by some danger of discovery. Perdita and Lord Essex waited one summer evening on the island between Kew and Brentford until a signal was given them by the prince to cross over in a boat to the banks of the Thames, near the palace, where he was to receive them. Perdita declared that heaven could witness how many conflicts her agitated heart endured at that moment. At last a white handkerchief was seen to flutter in the dusky light of evening, and in a few minutes the trembling fair one and her conductor stood before the dark gates of old Kew Palace, where the prince and his brother Frederick awaited them wrapped in great-coats, in order to disguise themselves.

The hour long sought and hoped for had come at last; the lovers met, but, alas, for but too brief a time; for, scarcely had they exchanged a few words expressive of their mutual delight, when a sudden noise of people approaching from the palace startled them all, and, after a few more phrases 'of an affectionate nature,' the royal youth hurried away, lest it should be discovered he was out at so late an

hour. This was their first meeting, the memory of which remained fresh in the fair Perdita's heart long years afterwards.

‘The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious, yet manly voice,’ says the infatuated young woman, ‘will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten.’

Other meetings quickly followed. Perdita left the stage, and became the acknowledged mistress of the heir-apparent, who gave her a bond, promising to pay her the sum of twenty thousand pounds when he came of age. Perdita, as she was now called, became the fashion; her carriage, as we learn from a paragraph devoted to details of London life in the *Ramblers' Magazine*, was the admiration of the town. ‘The body is of carmelite and silver, ornamented with a French mantle, and the cypher in a wreath of flowers; the carriage scarlet and silver, the seat-cloth richly ornamented with silver fringe. Mrs. Robinson's livery is green faced with yellow, and richly trimmed with broad silver lace, the harness ornamented with stars of silver richly

chased and elegantly finished. The inside of the carriage is lined with white silk, embellished with scarlet trimmings.' Perdita was luxurious.

When she went shopping or drove in the park, she was surrounded by admiring crowds, and attended by worshipping gallants, whilst her poems were eagerly bought and read, and her pictures displayed in the windows of the print-shops. She was universally praised for her beauty, her talents, and her gifts, and her reign was right merry, though short. Long before the prince came of age, he paid his devotions at the shrines of new goddesses, and his affection had become cold towards the fair Perdita, to whom he had promised eternal love and twenty thousand pounds. By degrees he deserted her in right princely fashion, when she appealed to him with tears and prayers not to forsake her. But these were all in vain ; he would not even grant her an interview, until at last, afraid of her vehemence, he consented, when, to her great surprise, he appeared unchanged, and he repeatedly assured her he had never for a moment ceased to love her ; only the next day, when she encountered His Royal Highness in Hyde Park, he passed

her without the faintest recognition. Nor was this all : when she in due time presented her bond, he refused to pay it. Though she had quitted her profession at his suggestion, he was unwilling to make her any compensation, and, even when the matter came to the ears of the king, his virtuous Majesty agreed with the prince's decision, and writes to Lord North that His Royal Highness sent Perdita 'letters and very foolish promises, which undoubtedly, by her conduct, she has cancelled.' A compromise was finally arrived at between the prince and the actress, when his letters were bought for the sum of £5,000, and an annuity of £500 settled on her during life.

With this sum Perdita went to Paris, where her fame had already preceded her, and where she was known as *la belle Anglaise* ; here she gained the notice of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, who presented her with a purse worked by the hand of that daughter of the Cæsars. She afterwards returned to England, and devoted her talents to literature, which she, however, in common with others before and since, held as 'a destroying labour.' She gave the

world several poems, whose very names, 'To a Swan,' 'Pity's Tear,' 'On a Kiss,' &c., will guarantee for their sentiment; wrote a tragedy, 'The Sicilian Lover,' and a couple of novels, 'Hubert de Sevrac,' and 'Vancenza; or, The Danger of Credulity,' all of which were more or less successful; later on she undertook—wonderful to be told of those days—the poetical department of the *Morning Post*, and lived to the unromantic age of forty-three.

It was at this period of the social history of the Court that the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland came prominently forward once more. Her Grace had not been admitted to the royal drawing-rooms, and was ignored by her kingly brother-in-law, who, though he permitted the duke to hold levées, forbade those who held any office at Court to attend the duchess's assemblies. Her Grace, who was, however, a woman of the world, at once clever and wily, prepared to wage battle with royalty for her position, and to revenge herself on their Majesties when opportunity offered. This was not long in presenting itself in the person of the young Prince of Wales, then commencing a

career of infamy, and of hostility to the king, which promised to become as vigorous as that which had notoriously distinguished the heirs to the throne of the first and second monarchs of his line.

The Duke of Cumberland, who resented what he regarded as the insults of the Court to his wife; who was dissatisfied with the king's treatment of himself; and who was, moreover, swayed by his spouse, readily agreed in using the Prince of Wales as a tool with which to punish His Majesty. Accordingly the duke professed a strong affection for his nephew, whom he familiarly designated Taffy, which a similarity in their dispositions soon cemented. Under the able guidance of the duke, the prince was led into scenes of the most degrading vice, introduced to money-lenders, taught to drink and gamble, and encouraged in his opposition to the king. His Majesty was indignant at this conduct, and complained to the Duke of Gloucester that his brother of Cumberland 'comes to the queen's house fourteen times a week to my son the prince, and passes by my door but never comes in to me,

and, if he meets me there, he only pulls off his hat and walks away.'

Meanwhile the Duchess of Cumberland resolved to hold periodical drawing-rooms, but, fearing they might be deserted, as they had been shortly after her marriage, she had determined to court popularity; she therefore stooped to conquer. My Lord Shelburne being opportunely ill, she must call on my lady to express her deep sympathies, and, having heard that Devonshire House had been refurnished, she strongly expressed a desire to inspect it to her Grace of Devonshire, and became enraptured with the exquisite taste displayed. Moreover, she called on the Duchess of Marlborough, invited herself to Lady Salisbury's house at Hatfield, returned the visits of duchesses and countesses paid her, would not suffer her hand to be kissed, and finally went to general assemblies. When this course had gained her sufficient popularity, she opened her drawing-rooms, which now became crowded.

Elated by so much success, the duchess resolved on giving a ball on a magnificent scale to the Prince of Wales, but the king, strictly

forbidding anyone connected with the Court to attend, this entertainment was changed to a dinner for the prince's gentlemen and household. Alas! once more the royal mandate went forth prohibiting all good courtiers from sitting down to this feast, when the duke became exasperated, and wrote his royal brother a wrathful letter, in which he declared that England was a country not fit for a gentleman to live in, and that he should go abroad. But this was merely a threat; the duke stayed at home, and even went to the royal drawing-room, for if he absented himself, the duchess sagaciously said, he might lose his influence over the prince.

There was little fear, however, of such a possibility; the heir-apparent and his worthless uncle became faster friends than before. The duke established a faro bank at Cumberland House, that the prince might have a convenient opportunity of gambling, and, in consort with the duchess, openly favoured His Royal Highness's new amour for Mrs. Armstead, afterwards the mistress and wife of Charles James Fox.

Whilst yet in his minority, the prince steadily

pursued a course of vulgar vice and degradation which the king seemed powerless to check. Speaking of him in May, 1781, Horace Walpole says, in his last journals,

‘The conduct of the Prince of Wales began already to make the greatest noise, and proved how very bad his education had been, or rather that he had had little or none, but had only been locked up and suffered to keep company with the lowest domestics; while the Duke of Montague and Hurd, Bishop of Lichfield, had thought of nothing but paying court to the king and queen and her German women. The prince drank more publicly in the drawing-room, and talked there irreverently and indecently in the openest manner (both which were the style of the Duchess of Cumberland). He passed the nights in the lowest debaucheries, at the same time bragging of intrigues with women of quality, whom he named publicly. Both the prince and the duke talked of the king in the grossest terms even in his hearing, as he told the Duke of Gloucester, who asked him why he did not forbid his son seeing his brother. The king replied that he feared his son

would not obey him. The Duke of Cumberland dropped that he meant by this outrageous behaviour to force the king to yield to terms in favour of his duchess, having gotten entire command over the prince.' The king likewise complained that, when he hunted, 'neither my son nor my brother speak to me; and lately, when the chase ended at a little village where there was but a single post-chaise to be hired, my son and brother got into it and drove to London, leaving me to go home in a cart, if I could find one.' 'His Majesty added,' Walpole continues, 'that when at Windsor, where he always dines at three, and in town at four, if he asked the prince to dine with him, he always came at four at Windsor, and in town at five, and all the servants saw the father waiting an hour for the son; that, since the Court was come to town, the Duke of Cumberland carried the prince to the lowest places of debauchery, where they got dead drunk, and were often carried home in that condition.'

About this time, a royal carousal was held, a rumour of which got whispered about from drawing-room to club-room, until it was at last

celebrated in verse in one of the public papers. It happened that one night, when the king had gone to bed, the prince as usual stole out of Buckingham House, and, joined by his besotted uncle the Duke of Cumberland, and several boon companions, amongst whom were Charles Windham, St. Leger, and George Pitt, they immediately set out for Blackheath to sup with my Lord Chesterfield. This was the successor to the politest courtier and ugliest man of George II.'s reign; the wit and mimic who had amused and plagued Queen Caroline and her merry maids. The present lord had some of the humour, but none of the elegant courtesy, of the late earl, and had, moreover, the unpleasant reputation of having brought his tutor, Dr. Dodd, to justice and the scaffold, because the reverend man had forged his lordship's name. However, he was one of the boon companions to the future king, and regarded by that august personage as one of his selected guides, philosophers, and friends.

Lord Chesterfield, though anxious to please his royal guest, refused, as a married man, to invite the company which the prince very much

desired; but this drawback to the amusement of the hour was speedily forgotten in the pleasures derived from the wine-bottle, and in a little while the whole of that goodly company were drunk. The prince had filled his glass more frequently than his companions, and was at an early stage of the night's revelry conducted to his couch, whilst his friends continued to make merry. Suddenly one of them bethought him of drinking a toast which he had no doubt would be popular with his *confrères*, and, with glass in hand, rose up and proposed, '*A short reign to the king.*' The prince had by this time sufficiently recovered to understand the purport of the words, and some sense of shame and remorse appealing to his confused senses, he roused himself, staggered to the table, and, filling a bumper, gave and drank the toast, '*Long live the king.*'

But this little *contretemps* was not allowed to interrupt the general harmony of the night, and presently one of the select company suggested that they should have a man-and-beast fight, which met with unanimous approval. My Lord Chesterfield was known to keep a fierce bull-

dog, and George Pitt, a muscular Christian with the reputation of a prize-fighter, declared he would tear the animal's tongue from its roots. The prince and his friends were delighted at the prospect of such sport; the dog was accordingly let loose, and George Pitt strove in the royal presence to put his brutal boast into practice; but the animal, escaping from him in an agony, rushed at Charles Windham, whom he bit, and then at a servant's leg, which he tore and mangled. By the time this pastime ended, it was early morning; the prince remembered he must get back, and my Lord Chesterfield insisted on lighting his guest to the door; but, alas, so drunk was the descendant of the polite letter-writer, that he mistook his way, and fell with a crash into the area, when it was thought his wit had gone out for ever. He was, however, spared to get drunk another day.

About this time the heir to the throne became acquainted with Charles James Fox, the second son of Henry Fox, first Lord Holland, one of the most distinguished, clever, and dissipated men of the day.

The favourite son of the statesman, he had

been brought up in the most luxurious fashion, and treated with the most extravagant indulgence ; and, whilst an Eton schoolboy yet under the age of fourteen, had been taken to Paris and Spa, where he first acquired that taste for gambling which ultimately became the bane of his life. Clever, handsome, and winning even as a lad, he gave promise of those brilliant attainments and powers of personal fascination which marked his early manhood and ripened with his later years.

Leaving Oxford whilst yet in his teens, with a thorough knowledge of classics, and a familiar acquaintance with the literature of his own country, he, in company with Lord Carlisle, made the grand tour, and gained a polish which ever afterwards distinguished his manner, and a knowledge of the world such as is seldom attained by one of his years. Whilst yet abroad, he was, through his father's interest, elected as representative for Midhurst ; this was in May, 1768, when he was in his nineteenth year. He returned to England in the following November a finished gentleman of the first water, a man with a future. His name, as the son of an ex-

cabinet minister, had been a sufficient passport to the highest circles abroad, and the liberal allowance made him by his father had enabled him to maintain an extravagance of which eight servants was not the least item. He had mixed with the most accomplished society of which Europe could boast, had been graciously received at courts, entertained by ambassadors, had played the fop at Turin, had gambled at Naples, had experienced the dissipations of Paris,

‘Saw every Court, heard every king declare
His royal sense of operas or the fair,’

had conversed with Voltaire at Ferney, and had received from the lips of the venerable cynic a list of his works such as would ‘fortify him against religious prejudices.’ After this interview, the French philosopher wrote to Lord Holland, ‘Yr son is an English lad and j an old frenchman. He is healthy and j am sick. Yet j love him with all my heart, not only for his father, but for him self.’

Fox was not, however, spoiled by his experiences abroad; true, he for some time after his return to England wore the dress of a fop, but

at heart 'he was a man made to be loved,' as Burke said, and his polished courtesy, scholarly lore, love of wit, reckless folly, unassuming manners, and genuine good-humour gained him friends whose names were legion.

On account of his minority, he was unable to vote in the House of Commons, but, shortly after taking his seat, he spoke with great fluency in support of the expulsion of Wilkes. In the second year of his parliamentary career, he was made a junior Lord of the Admiralty, an office he resigned two years later on account of his opposition to the Royal Marriage Bill, which first caused him to be regarded by the king with a dislike that afterwards deepened to hatred. He was soon after appointed one of the Lords of the Treasury, but was dismissed by the premier, Lord North, whom he had defeated on a division. The political eminence he thus early acquired was fully equalled by the social distinction he gained; he was the friend of the beautiful Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, the companion of the distinguished Lord Carlisle, the intimate of that most excellent wit, George Selwyn; he was a member of Brooke's, White's,

and Arthur's clubs, was sought after for his conviviality, copied in the cut of his coat, and flattered and loved by the most frail, brilliant, and pleasure-loving society of the period.

This was the man with whom the Prince of Wales was anxious to become acquainted, and with whom he shared many characteristics in common. The heir to the throne at this time bade fair to become popular; nor was this feeling towards him in the least prejudiced by the vices he exhibited in an age of general depravity. He possessed a certain grace seldom disassociated from youth; in his manner he betrayed an easy dignity, in his address an acquired polish, and in his character an appearance of generosity and open liberality which exerted a fascination over all those who approached him. In person he was remarkably well-made and handsome; he could boast of an education unusual in princes, and his amours exhibited a gallantry which came as a relief to the disgusting coarseness that had distinguished those of his immediate ancestors. Moreover, he appreciated wit, loved good-fellowship, could make a pretty speech, return a compliment with exceeding

suavity, and had a talent for acquiring friends.

His acquaintance with Charles James Fox rapidly led to a friendship which in turn soon glided into familiarity. His Royal Highness addresses the young statesman as his 'dear Charles' at a very early stage of their intimacy, and dined with him at his rooms in St. James's Street, where they both drank royally. Later on, but before the prince had attained his majority, Horace Walpole speaks of him as having 'thrown himself into the arms of Charles Fox, and this in the most indecent and undisguised manner. Fox lodged in St. James's Street, and as soon as he rose, which was very late, had a levée of his followers, and of the members of the Gaming Club at Brookes', all his disciples. His bristly black person and shagged breast quite open, and rarely purified by any ablutions, was wrapped in a foul linen night-gown, and his bushy hair dishevelled. In these cynic weeds, and with epicurean good-humour, did he dedicate his politics—and in this school did the heir of the crown attend his lessons and imbibe them. Fox's followers, to whom he had never enjoined Pythagorean silence, were

strangely licentious in their conversation about the king. At Brookes' they proposed wagers on the duration of his reign; and if they moderated their irreverent jests in the presence of the prince, it was not extraordinary that the orgies at Brookes' might be reported to have passed at Fox's levées, or that the king should suspect that the same disloyal topics should be handled in the morning that he knew had been the themes of each preceding evening.'

His Majesty, therefore, looked upon the friendship between the prince and Fox with fear and displeasure, feelings which troubled His Royal Highness but little; for he found Charles Fox as a friend to be one of the most delightful men in the kingdom, and as a politician he trusted he might prove one of the most useful to him in the Commons.

Early in 1783, Charles Fox came into power as one of the Secretaries of State in the new government of which the Duke of Portland was First Lord of the Treasury, and in the August of the same year the Prince of Wales would attain his majority, when a revenue and settlement would be duly provided for him. The

prince looked forward with great expectations to the time when he should be free from all paternal control, and placed his faith and hope in Fox, that by his exertions he might be able to enjoy an income which would in no way curtail his princely pleasures. Nor were these hopes misplaced. The new ministry, at the instigation of Fox, proposed to allow His Royal Highness £100,000 a year, a sum just double that enjoyed by the last Prince of Wales long after he had a wife and children.

At this announcement the king was surprised and displeased; taking into consideration the heavy financial embarrassments under which the country then laboured, he declared £50,000 was a sufficient allowance for the prince. On account of this disagreement, His Royal Highness 'had a fever with vexation,' and the ministry was on the point of resigning, when Charles Fox went to his royal friend and begged of him to submit himself entirely to the king; which advice the prince had sufficient sense to follow. No grant was therefore demanded from Parliament; the king, out of his own income, made the prince an allowance of £50,000 a year, with

the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, which amounted to £12,000 per annum. Parliament, however, gave £30,000 to pay the prince's debts, and the same sum for the expenses of his new establishment.

The prince now moved to Carlton House, which had not been occupied since the death of his grandmother, the well-abused Princess of Wales. The king's second and favourite son, Edward, Bishop of Osnaburgh, had a few months previously been created Duke of York and Albany, and had received command of the Coldstream Guards. He was now sent out of the country to a German university, in order that he might be free from the example and influence of the heir to the throne; for a similar reason His Majesty's third son, William Henry, was sent into the navy.

Having had his debts paid, and being now lord of himself, the recipient of a settled income, and master of a separate establishment which numbered his chosen friends, the Prince of Wales made Carlton House the central point of attraction, the scene of unchecked dissipation, and the general rallying-place for the ministry which

was bitterly detested by the king. This cabinet, against which the royal wrath was directed, was not destined to survive long. In this year, Fox introduced the famous Indian Bill, which passed through its various stages in the Commons by large majorities, but meeting with the direct opposition of His Majesty, who declared he would consider those peers who voted for it as his enemies, it was rejected in the Upper House by a majority of nineteen.

This proved fatal to the ministry, for, on the very evening of the day on which it had been thrown out, the king, glad of this opportunity of ridding himself of ministers whom he hated, sent messages to Lord North and Charles Fox, stating he had no longer any necessity for their services, and requiring them to deliver up their seals of office as Secretaries of State. A new cabinet was therefore formed, with Pitt as premier, which had to contend with an opposition, headed by Fox, more formidable in numerical force, as well as brilliant talent, than any which had appeared in parliament since the days of Charles I. Pitt and his cabinet were favoured by the king, Fox and his par-

tisans by the Prince of Wales, and this feud between His Majesty and the heir to the crown was widened by circumstances which quickly followed.

As supporters in the House of Lords, Fox could number the Dukes of Devonshire, Portland, Norfolk, Bedford, and Northumberland; the Earls of Derby, Cholmondeley, and Fitzwilliam; and Lords St. John, Ponsonby, Craven, and Southampton; whilst in the Lower House his party embraced some of the most influential commoners in the nation.

He was therefore determined that the Pitt Ministry should not stand, and, at an early sitting of the new parliament, a motion was carried, declaring the new ministers incompetent to conduct public business. The premier, however, bore the sentence of condemnation calmly, and gave no indication of resigning. The king was subsequently addressed on three several occasions by the Commons to dismiss those in office, but to these requests His Sacred Majesty turned a deaf ear. Fox, however, was firm in his resolution to oust the ministers from their places, and, with that courage which distin-

guished his career, moved a daring remonstrance to the king for persevering in opposition to the declared wishes of his faithful Commons. This was carried by a majority of one, and parliament was dissolved.

Now came a time of trial and excitement for Fox and his friends which will remain for ever memorable in the annals of electioneering warfare. Fox became candidate for the representation of Westminster, and no exertion or influence which the Court could use, or the members of the late government could bring into force, were spared to hinder him from representing a seat so conspicuous in parliament, and which was now powerfully contested by men of interest and reputation—Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray—who had formed a coalition against him. On the other hand, Fox was supported by the influential interests of his noble friends, amongst whom was the heir to the throne. All minor details of the general struggle going on throughout the country were lost sight of in this powerful and exciting contention on which the eyes of the whole nation were turned ; whilst the city, during the forty-seven days which the poll

was kept open, presented a continued scene of turmoil and bloodshed.

Matters were at this pitch, when one of the most brilliant women in England came forward as Fox's ally, and declared her determination of openly canvassing for him. This was the famous Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, whom Walpole has happily styled 'the empress of fashion.' 'Her hair,' says the gallant Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, 'was not without a tinge of red, and her face, though pleasing, yet, had it not been illuminated by her mind, might have been considered as an ordinary countenance.'

It was not, however, to her personal appearance that she owed her powers of attraction, but to the great grace of her manners, to the exquisite charm of her movements, and the seeming unconsciousness of her gifts, all of which exercised an influence that amounted to fascination over those with whom she came in contact.

In a moment so critical for the candidature of Westminster, such a partisan could scarcely be sufficiently appreciated. Having been furnished with lists of voters in the outskirts of

the town, the charming duchess, accompanied by her sister, the Viscountess Duncannon, drove to their houses, where she exerted those powers which had hitherto always proved irresistible; neither entreaties, promises, nor, in some cases, kisses were spared, and she had frequently the triumph of conveying voters, whom her persuasions had won to her cause, in her own coach to the hustings. It was during this canvass that an Irish labourer, whose interests she solicited, paid her a compliment which, coming voluntarily and unexpectedly, she was far prouder of than of the most courteous phrase from the lips of a polished courtier. 'Me lady,' said this gallant Hibernian, 'your eyes are so bright I could light me pipe at them.'

The result of her untiring exertion soon showed itself; before she had commenced her canvass, Sir Cecil Wray had surpassed Fox by a hundred votes, but at the close of the poll Fox had outstripped him by more than double that number, and his victory was complete. He was now hailed as 'the man of the people.' The delight of his friends was unbounded, and the

duchess's praises were sung in a hundred ballads ; one of which said,

‘ Array’d in matchless beauty, Devon’s fair
In Fox’s favour takes a zealous part ;
But oh ! where’er the pilferer comes beware,
She supplicates a vote, and steals a heart.’

A procession in honour of this successful election took place at once, while the friends of the favoured candidate were yet in a fever of enthusiasm, and the mob half-mad with an excitement which reached its climax at this hour. First in this strange political demonstration came a gay cavalcade, one of the horsemen in which bore a floating banner with the inscription, in compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, ‘ Sacred to Female Patriotism ;’ then followed the equipages of the Dukes of Devonshire and Portland, each drawn by six horses gaily caparisoned ; then Fox’s carriage, with his friends, the Hon. Colonel North, afterwards Earl of Guildford, and Mr. Adam, mounted on the braces ; then amongst ringing cheers, followed by a vast crowd, came the hero of the hour, elevated in a chair hung with wreaths of laurel, having, as Sir Nathaniel Wraxall says, ‘ the

ostrich plumes which transport us to the field of Cressy, and which, during more than four centuries, have constituted the crest of the successive heirs-apparent to the English throne, openly borne before him; an exhibition that inspired many beholders with sentiments such as were felt by numbers among the Roman people when Antony displayed the deities of Egypt, mingled with the eagles of the republic,

‘Interque signa, turpe, militaria,
Sol adspicit canopeum.’

After traversing the principal streets at the west end of the town, the procession came to Carlton House, the gates of which were flung wide open to receive it, when it passed through the court in front, and then wound its way to Devonshire House, where the Prince of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Duncannon, Mrs. Crew, and a brilliant assembly were collected. Fox then addressed the immense crowd and dismissed them; but at night the populace gave further expression to its joy by an almost general illumination.

On the next day, May 18, the prince gave a fête to celebrate his friend's victory. This took

the form of a breakfast, and at midday over six hundred guests, who included the rank, talent, and beauty of his adherents, assembled on the lawn in front of Carlton House. The day was bright and warm, and the scene one of unusual brilliancy. Scattered all over the smooth, grassy sward were groups of men and women—most of them attired in blue and yellow, the republican colours adopted by Fox—whose sole business in life seemed the enjoyment of the present hour. Breakfast was laid under nine marquises, a band filled the air with music. At this hour His Majesty proceeded in state to open Parliament, and, separated from the lawn only by a low boundary wall, had the bitter mortification of seeing his political enemies being sumptuously entertained by his son. After breakfast the company rose to dance on that part of the sward shaded by a group of trees; the prince and her Grace of Devonshire leading the way. Dancing continued until six in the evening, when the guests retired, to prepare themselves for a supper given by Mrs. Crew, wife to the member for the county of Cheshire, a woman of brilliant parts and a lively partisan of Fox's. At this entertainment all

the guests, including the Prince of Wales, were dressed in blue and yellow. The supper, magnificent and costly, was enjoyed by all; at its close, His Royal Highness rose to give the toast of the evening, and, bowing to his hostess with that grace said to rival Louis XIV., the model of all gallantry, he drank to 'True Blue and Mrs. Crew.' This sample of wit and eloquence, coming from right royal lips, was received with a rapture befitting the occasion; the lady was overwhelmed by this honour, but was not to be outdone in courtesy; rising, she bowed low to the prince, and raising her glass, cried out, 'True blue and all of you.'

Nor was this all; a few days later a second fête was given by the heir to the crown, which was intended to surpass in luxury and magnificence anything of the kind which had been yet attempted. It commenced on the noon of one day and ended on the morning of the next. The first of these series of alterations at Carlton House for which the prince had a mania, and for which the nation dearly paid, had been completed a month previously, and now the various apartments opening on one another, the dining-

room with its magnificent chandeliers, the gilded state-room, the spacious ball-room, and finally the orchestra, presented a superb sight. A banquet was served to the ladies, on whom, in a spirit of chivalry, the prince and his male friends waited; and later on the ball-room became a scene of unequalled brilliancy.

By this time the prince's amour with Mrs. Armstead had ended, and that lady had returned to the protection of Charles Fox, who regarded her change of feelings in a thoroughly unprejudiced, philosophic, and friendly light. The prince's royal, but fickle heart being once more free, he hastened to bestow it on the notorious Mrs. Billington, a second-rate public singer, who warbled at Covent Garden Theatre, behind the scenes of which he first met and became enamoured of her. The object of this tender passion was no beauty. In a manuscript letter in the collection of Richard Orlebar, Esq., of Henwick House, Bedfordshire, written in 1788 by Miss Orlebar, the actress is described as 'a pretty little figure, pale and seemingly consumptive, though a very cunning look in her eyes. When she exerts herself, you can absolutely

see the bones in her poor, thin neck.' The writer concludes by mentioning she was the Duke of Cumberland's favourite. Moreover, this lady, whose attraction for the prince must have been her previous reputation, was coarse in manner and avaricious; the result was that His Royal Highness soon left her for the greater charms of Mrs. Crouch, the daughter of Peregrine Phillips, an actress and singer of considerable merits. Mrs. Billington, it may be mentioned, afterwards became devoted to the Church, as represented in the person of a bishop, who acted as her friend not only in a sense spiritual, but temporal. Mrs. Crouch, as may be supposed, had had a husband and several lovers, some of whom were young, ardent, and poetic; many of the latter had written her execrable effusions, 'On Mrs. Crouch in the character of Æneas,' and 'On Mrs. Crouch on seeing her in the character of Venus,' and on beholding her clasping a rose, and engaged in various other occupations. One of these assured her,

'Clad like a modern courtly dame
From Paphos isle fair Venus came.'

She, of course, being the Venus; another gentleman, whose youth we may imagine was as tender as his heart, said of her,

‘Methinks I see you in your iv’ry car,
Sparkling in gems, like the bright morning star;
In purple cloth’d your head with roses crown’d,
And your moist hair with golden fillets bound.’

With the reckless extravagance which characterised him, the prince lavished vast sums upon her; in one instance to the amount of £10,000, independently of a profusion of jewellery to the value of £5,000. Moreover, this generosity, for which the nation was destined to pay, was not limited to such sums, and he finally made a settlement on her of £1,200 a year for life, which, however, like the bond given to Perdita Robinson, he refused to pay shortly afterwards, as ‘no valuable consideration had been given,’ he said. Mrs. Crouch, whilst she enjoyed his favour, removed from her rooms in Pall Mall, and took a house in the more fashionable quarter of Berkeley Square, where she gave charming entertainments and concerts that were patronised by the prince and his friends.

Meanwhile, whilst he devoted his nights to the society of various sirens, England’s future king spent his days at cock-fights, dog-fights, and pugilistic encounters, in all of which he took great interest and delight. He also estab-

lished a stud on a scale regardless of expense, ran his horses at all the celebrated courses, where he was to be seen backing his favourites with heavy stakes, and to hasten his route down this road to ruin, on which he had set out with such speed, he gambled night and day, and lost immense sums.

‘His nights which were not otherwise employed,’ says Huish, in his memoirs of George IV., ‘were spent at the faro-table, whither he was often taken in a state of almost helpless intoxication, to render him the greater dupe of those who were then fattening on the unhallowed spoil obtained by their villainy.’

The prince’s personal friend, Major Hanger, in his life, mentions an incident regarding one of His Royal Highness’s carousals, which happened at a time when his coffers were empty. In company with such merry men as the major afore-mentioned, Charles Fox, Sheridan, and Berkeley, the prince sought adventure at the ‘Staffordshire Arms’ tavern, from whence he sent for further company agreeable to himself and his friends, who, presently joining them, created much diversion. The night was passed

in a general carousal, and in the early hours of morning it was found there was not a sufficient sum amongst the united company to defray expenses. At this critical moment one of the party suggested that, as Sheridan was helplessly drunk, he should be left as a hostage for the debt, an idea at once acted on by the prince and his other friends, who thus avoided payment of the reckoning. Poor, reckless, brilliant spendthrift, good-hearted Sheridan, long years afterwards his corpse was arrested at the hands of the law for the sum of £500.

CHAPTER VI.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Miss Betsy Linley—Sheridan Introduced to the Prince—Interview with a Child of Israel—The Royal Debts—Mrs. Fitzherbert—Flight to the Continent—The Prince's Tears and Despair—Letter from Charles Fox—Marriage of Mrs Fitzherbert—Cowardice and Deception of the Prince—The King's Social Life—His Original Criticisms on Shakespeare—Her Majesty's Opinion of the 'Sorrows of Werter'—Mrs Siddons at the Play and at Windsor—Signs of the King's Madness.

THIS new companion of His Royal Highness, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was the son of old Tom Sheridan the player, and Frances, his wife, a lady who wrote some excellent novels and clever plays, one of which—to wit, 'The Discovery'—Garrick declared to be one of the best comedies he had ever read. From her, Richard Brinsley no doubt inherited a share of that talent which afterwards so highly distinguished him. He was educated at Harrow,

which he left, it may be here remarked, without being able to spell ; and, when not long out of his teens, fell in love with Miss Betsy Linley, then in her sixteenth year, a public singer whose voice, according to the authorities of the day, rivalled the nightingale's, and whose beauty was simply angelic.

Miss Linley was not without admirers, one of whom was a gentleman named Long, whose suit, notwithstanding that his years numbered seventy, was looked upon with favour by a kindly, though practical parent, by reason of the suitor's wealth ; another of these admirers was a gentle, romantic youth named Halhed, who informed Miss Betsy in a florid letter that, 'just as the Egyptian pharmacists were wont, in embalming a dead body, to draw the brain out through the ears with a crooked hook, this nightingale has drawn out through mine ears, not only my brain, but my heart also ;' whilst a third lover, Captain Matthews, a coward and a scamp, gave more trouble than any of his rivals ; his intentions, moreover, were dishonourable.

From these troublesome suitors she eloped

with Richard Brinsley Sheridan to France, where they were married, to the great indignation of their unsympathetic parents. After marriage, Sheridan, who had not a penny in the world, was too dignified and too Irish to permit his wife to earn an honest income by her talents; yet they did not starve, as they had share of £3,000 which good-hearted Mr. Long had settled upon Miss Betsy when she had refused his suit. After awhile, being, alas, sorely pressed for money, Sheridan, who was naturally indolent, and seldom worked but when there was necessity for gold, wrote '*The Rivals*,' which, owing chiefly to the bad acting of one of the performers, was a failure on the night of its first representation, but eventually the play proved a vast favourite with the public.

Its author now became a shareholder in the Drury Lane play-house, for which he paid down the sum of £10,000, to the great astonishment of all his friends, who failed to ascertain how he became possessed of such a sum. Sheridan, however, could keep a secret, and this one was so well guarded that his biographers have never been able to throw any light on the matter.

He now wrote another play, 'A Trip to Scarborough,' and in 1777, when his years numbered six and twenty, gave the world that bright, clever comedy, 'The School for Scandal,' which has become an English classic.

He was now at the meridian of his brilliant intellectual powers; his *bon mots* were repeated in all quarters of the town, his wit universally lauded, his society eagerly sought after. He soon made the acquaintance of Fox, who, delighted with his humour and the vivacious, easy flow of his conversation, introduced him to the Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness, impulsive and pleasure-loving, declared himself charmed with his conviviality; they soon became friends, and their friendship so quickly ripened into intimacy that the prince styled him his 'dear Sherry;' indeed His Royal Highness found the player's son indispensable to his enjoyment, and in his company he drank, gambled, betted, and sought adventures of a certain class, for which they both had, alas, a common appetite and appreciation.

But such a career, without ample means to sustain it, soon reduced the reckless Sherry to

many shifts, and brought him in contact with a large number of the children of Israel, whose threatened vengeance he not unfrequently turned aside by his wonderful force of persuasion, or his inimitable powers of acting. It was to one of these gentlemen, who rejoiced in the name of Moses Aaron, that Sheridan on a memorable occasion addressed himself on behalf of the prince, who suffered at the time from a pressing pecuniary difficulty. The place of appointment was an ante-chamber in Carlton House, where the man of money was graciously saluted by Sheridan, who was alone in the apartment when the Jew entered.

‘Ah! my friend Moses,’ he said, with an air of great delight, ‘how do you do?’

‘I would do better, Mr. Sheridan,’ replied this sagacious child of Israel, ‘if I had my due.’

‘Ah! my friend,’ said Sherry, yet more blandly, ‘if every man had that, many of them would have a halter.’

‘It may be so, Mr. Sheridan,’ remarked Moses, who knew his customer only too well. ‘You, I know, are a most *conscientious* man, and I dare say you speak as you *feel*.’

‘Well hit,’ Sheridan said, good-humouredly; ‘but did you get that little bill done for me?’

‘No, Mr. Sheridan,’ said Moses, firmly, ‘it was not to be done,’ and he rubbed his bony hands one over the other.

‘Money must be devilish scarce,’ replied Sheridan, with something like a sigh.

‘Or there must be something the matter with the credit of the parties,’ said the money-lender, shrewdly, his under lip curving as if about to smile.

‘Ah! it’s the times—the times,’ remarked Sherry, philosophically, as he watched the child of Israel.

‘What security have you to offer?’ asked the Jew, with an eye to business.

‘My honour,’ said the dramatist, grandly, laying his hand upon his heart with a theatrical gesture.

‘Won’t do,’ answered Moses, shaking his wise old head; ‘it’s quite threadbare long ago.’

‘But if the prince goes security?’

‘Ah!’ said the Jew, with a chuckle, ‘that alters the case,’ and he rubbed his dirty hands once more.

‘Then,’ said Sheridan, ‘let us go in to the prince,’ and so saying he led the way to the next room.

From the introduction of Moses Aaron to the heir to the throne, these difficulties which soon

beset the royal path, and quickly accumulated, may be said to have commenced. The loan required by Sheridan for the prince was soon effected, and proved but the forerunner of many others which he, reckless in his expenditure, hurried on by his passions, and glad to find any temporary escape from his grievous difficulties, eagerly sought for and obtained on terms of usurious interest.

On one occasion Moses Aaron raised for him the sum of £10,000, for a post-obit bond, payable on the death of the king. Of this money, he received in reality but £7,000, the remaining sum being made up, according to a practice known then and now, of various articles, the most useful of which were two hogsheads of French playing-cards, and three punchcons of French brandy, manufactured at a distillery in Whitechapel. There was also a diamond cross and a rosary, the diamonds being manufactured at Houndsditch, and two hundred tea-urns, which the prince soon disposed of to another Jew at quarter the price that honest Moses Aaron had charged him. It may be recorded in the history of these tea-urns, that in less than three

months, they found their way once more to Carlton House, under circumstances the same as those which first brought them within the precincts of that royal residence.

Notwithstanding his income of £62,000 a year, and the £60,000 which had been granted him by Parliament on his coming of age, his debts amounted in three years to £160,000. At this crisis in his affairs, the prince resolved to consult Sir James Harris, afterwards Lord Malmesbury, who had been Secretary of the Embassy at the Court of Madrid, and Minister at the Court of Catherine II., at St. Petersburg. In his valuable diaries and correspondence, he has left us an account of the interviews he had with the prince in 1785. The heir to the throne told him that, in the autumn of the previous year, he had written to the king, acquainting him of his embarrassed situation, and declaring his wishes to live abroad, in order that he might retrench. This the king would not hear of, but gave the prince to understand that, if he sent in an exact account of his debts, he would pay them. The prince did so, *en gros*, but, when the statement had

been kept four months, it was returned to him, saying it was not exact, as the articles were not specified. The prince returned it once more, with every article minuted but one, a lump sum of £25,000, which he was not willing to account for. It was borrowed money, he told Lord Malmesbury, and he was in honour bound not to say from whence it came. The king insisted on knowing how this was incurred, and declared, if it was a debt the prince was ashamed of, it was one which he, the king, ought not to pay. Here matters rested, His Royal Highness strongly expressing his determination of going abroad without His Majesty's permission.

At the second interview which Lord Malmesbury had with the coming king, that illustrious person announced that he had given up all idea of leaving England; a reason for which sudden change of opinion will afterwards be seen. Lord Malmesbury said, if the prince would give him leave, he would propose to Mr. Pitt to increase his revenue to £100,000 a year, but to this His Royal Highness would not listen. The king, he said, hated him, and that

he would turn Pitt out of office for entertaining such an idea; besides, he could not abandon Charles Fox and the Duke of Portland. His adviser, however, had wisely spoken to these politicians previously on the matter, and now told His Royal Highness they had informed him, they had no wish he, the prince, should take any share in party concerns; he furthermore hinted that a reconciliation with the king would be wise. Once more the prince repeated with warmth, and in the most forcible manner, that the king hated him, and added that, if Lord Malmesbury would not credit him, he would perhaps believe the king himself; saying which, he gave him the correspondence which had passed between them for the last six months to read.

‘The prince’s letters,’ said Lord Malmesbury, ‘were full of respect and deference, written with great plainness of style and simplicity. Those of the king were also well written, but harsh and severe; constantly refusing every request the prince made, and reprobating in each of them his extravagance and dissipated manner of living. They were void of every expression of parental kindness or affection;

and, after both hearing them read and perusing them myself, I was compelled to subscribe to the prince's opinion, and to confess there was very little appearance of making any impression on His Majesty in favour of His Royal Highness.'

Before the interview ended, Lord Malmesbury suggested the idea of the prince marrying; but he declared, with great vehemence, he would never marry; that he had settled it with Frederick (his next brother), to whose children the crown would descend.

The prince had arrived at this conclusion as he at the time contemplated marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert; a union which, according to the Royal Marriage Act, would prove illegal, and the children of which he knew would be regarded as illegitimate. That such a marriage took place, though long a matter of doubt, in consequence of its being repeatedly repudiated by the royal husband in the latter years of his life, is now a historical fact which has been conclusively established. Shortly after the death of George IV., and whilst Mrs. Fitzherbert lived, her friends considered it advisable

that her union with his late Majesty should be rescued from all doubt, and placed on the high level of certainty; therefore the Duke of Wellington and Sir William Knighton, the executors of George IV., concurring with the Earl of Albemarle and Lord Stourton, Mrs. Fitzherbert's nominees, deposited, in a strong box at Coutts' bank, in June, 1833, documents proving the marriage, amongst which were, according to a list attested by Lords Stourton and Albemarle, 'The certificate of the marriage, dated December 21, 1785; a letter from the late king, relating to the marriage, signed George IV.; a will written by the late King George IV.; and a memorandum written by Mrs. Fitzherbert attached to a letter written by the clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony.' This box bore the superscription, 'The property of the Earl of Albemarle, not to be opened by him without apprising the Duke of Wellington.' Its seals, it is believed, are yet unbroken.

At the death of Mrs. Fitzherbert, her kinsman, Lord Stourton, wished to make use of these documents; she had written to him from Paris, December 7, 1833, 'I trust, whenever it pleases

God to remove me from this world, that my conduct and character in your hands, will not disgrace my family or my friends;' and, now that the period to which she referred had arrived, he considered it his duty, by the publication of these papers, to place her memory beyond reproach in the eyes of the world. However, before the necessary permission could be granted, he died; the desire was then repeated by his brother, the Hon. Charles Langdale, to the Hon. and Rev. Edward Keppel, Lord Albemarle's executor, who was by no means anxious to accede to Mr. Langdale's wishes. The documents he wrote 'would only prove the marriage of the prince with Mrs. Fitzherbert, which is not questioned . . . the public might or might not be interested in the production of the papers, but the revival of the subject would only pander to the bad feelings or the curiosity of the great world without doing good.' This wise and reverent man withholding his consent, it was impossible for the Hon. Charles Langdale to get possession of the documents, and it therefore only remained for him to publish a narrative which Mrs. Fitzherbert had given his

brother, and which was left by the latter to him; to this we are indebted for many of the following facts.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, whose subsequent life became the subject of a royal romance, was originally known as Mary Anne Smythe. She was the daughter of a baronet, and had been twice married and widowed; when in her twenty-sixth year, she was introduced to the prince at her residence, Richmond Hill. Though not possessed of striking beauty, her personal appearance was pleasing, and her manners graceful, refined, and fascinating. For the prince, to see her was to love her, and his passion, conceived at first sight, increased all the more that it met with but slight encouragement from its object. Her treatment of him was far different from that of any other woman who had crossed his royal path, and, the more determined she was to refuse him her affection, the more anxious he became to make any sacrifice which could win her love. Mrs. Fitzherbert, however, would not consent to become his mistress, and knew that, according to the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act, she could not become his

wife. The prince now grew desperate, and resorted to a highly dramatic stratagem, which he believed could not fail to succeed in obtaining him his desires.

One morning Keit, His Royal Highness's physician, Lord Onslow, Lord Southampton, and Mr. Edward Bouverie drove up, in hot haste, to Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in Park Street, and entered her drawing-room in a state of great consternation. The prince, they said, had stabbed himself; his life was in imminent danger at that moment, and nothing on earth but her presence could save him. She was naturally much impressed and frightened on hearing this tale of woe, but, on consideration, declared nothing should induce her to enter Carlton House. These gallant men, however, continuing to assure her of the prince's most critical condition, her alarm was thoroughly roused; and she consented to see him, if she was accompanied by her friend, the Duchess of Devonshire. To this they immediately consented, and, calling at Devonshire House, they carried the charming Georgiana with them.

When Mrs. Fitzherbert entered the prince's room, she found him lying pale, agitated, and covered with blood; the effect of this dramatic situation was so striking, that she immediately fainted; but the tableau was not yet completed. When the lady recovered consciousness, the prince assured her in solemn tones that nothing would induce him to live, unless she promised to become his wife, and permitted him to put a ring on her finger. A ring was, therefore, taken from the Duchess of Devonshire, and this interesting scene ended. The audience and the fair heroine then adjourned to Devonshire House, where a deposition of what had occurred was drawn up, signed and sealed by each of the party, but she whom it chiefly concerned attached such little importance to it, that she left it behind her, and on considering over all that had passed, resolved quietly to quit the country; a resolution she carried into effect next day, having first written a letter to Lord Southampton protesting against what had taken place, as she was not then, she declared, a free agent. The prince was now

plunged in yet deeper despair, and, at this time, probably meant to follow her to the Continent.

With a taste and delicacy which require no comment, he rushed for consolation to his former mistress, Mrs. Armstead, who was then living comfortably with dear Charles Fox, at St. Anne's Hill, Chertsey. This lady afterwards told Lord Holland that the royal youth 'cried by the hour, that he testified the sincerity and violence of his passion and despair by the most extravagant expressions and actions; rolling on the floor, striking his forehead, tearing his hair, falling into hysterics, and swearing that he would abandon the country, forego the crown, sell his jewels and plate, and scrape together a competence, to fly with the object of his affections to America.'

Mrs. Fitzherbert remained abroad for eighteen months, during which time couriers were continually sent to her, carrying her amorous letters and propositions from her royal lover. Lord Stourton saw one of these in the prince's writing, which numbered thirty-seven pages, in which he stated the king would connive at

their union. At length, wearied of his entreaties, she returned to London, on the understanding that she should become his wife on conditions which would strictly satisfy her conscience, if not give her a legal claim to the throne. Rumours of her arrival soon spread about town, and the prince's friends were at once alarmed at the consequences which might ensue. Fox, actuated by the great regard he held for his royal patron, wrote to him to say he had heard of Mrs. Fitzherbert's return, news which he would have learned with the most unfeigned joy, but that he was told at the same time that he, the prince, was about to take a desperate step, and marry her. If such was really in his mind, he besought him, for God's sake, to consider the matter; for, in the first place, a marriage with a Catholic—the religion to which she belonged—threw the prince contracting such out of succession of the crown.

Charles then went on to say he had not heard of any public profession of change of religion on Mrs. Fitzherbert's part, and, if there should be a doubt of her conversion (which had never before, or after even, been hinted at), he prayed

the prince to consider how he should stand, 'the king not feeling for you as a father ought; the Duke of York professedly his favourite, and likely to be married agreeably to the king's wishes; the nation full of its old prejudices against Catholics, and justly dreading all disputes about succession.' He finished a long letter by declaring, if he were Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother, he would advise her not by any means to consent to a union which could not be considered other than a mock marriage, and 'to prefer any other species of connection with you, to one leading to so much misery and mischief.'

The prince, on answering his dear Charles, gave a specimen of the duplicity that was a part of his character; he told his friend to make himself easy, and to believe him the world would soon be convinced 'that there not only is not, but never was, any ground for those reports which of late have been so malevolently circulated.' Eleven days after the date of the prince's letter, on December 21, 1785, he was married to Mrs. Fitzherbert by a clergyman of the Church of England, though certain forms

and circumstances were observed as were recognised and used by the Catholic Church in the celebration of the marriage service. The ceremony took place in the drawing-room of the bride's house, and was witnessed by her uncle, Harry Errington, and her brother, Jack Smythe. The marriage certificate was made in the prince's handwriting, and was signed by him, as well as by the witnesses, but in a time of subsequent danger the names of the latter were cut off by Mrs. Fitzherbert to save her relatives from the peril of the statute of *præmunire*, which, according to *Blackstone's Commentaries*, they incurred by 'assisting or being present' at an unauthorised marriage with a descendant of George II. This she afterwards regretted, she told Stourton; but a letter from the prince, in which he thanked God that the witnesses of their union were still living, was preserved.

For a time the marriage was kept as a secret, but by degrees some rumours of it were whispered through the town, contradicted and repeated, doubted and re-asserted. In February, 1786, Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann,

‘I am obliged to you for your accounts of the House of Albany; but that extinguishing family can make no sensation here when we have other guess matter to talk of in a higher and more flourishing race; and yet were rumour—ay, much more than rumour, every voice in England—to be credited, the matter somehow or other, reaches even from London to Rome. I know nothing but the buzz of the day, nor can say more upon it: if I send you a riddle, fame, or echo, from so many voices, will soon reach you and explain the enigma; though I hope it is essentially void of truth, and that appearances rise from a much more common cause.’

So important a matter as the marriage of the heir-apparent was not long confined to the whispering of gossips; the public was anxious to ascertain if there was any truth in the rumour, and accordingly the first opportunity of bringing the subject forward in the House of Commons was eagerly seized on. This occurred when an appeal was made to increase the income of the prince, who was now overwhelmed by debts and difficulties, the result of his determined extravagance, from which the king had

wholly refused to extricate him. In April, 1786, Mr. Newenham, one of the members for the City of London, announced his intention to move an address to the throne, 'entreating His Majesty to inquire into the prince's embarrassed situation, and to rescue him from it,' on which Rolle, the member for Devonshire, rose up, and, in covert language which was thoroughly understood by all, stated that the present situation of His Royal Highness directly affected the Constitution both in Church and State.

This note of alarm struck the prince with dismay, for he saw the subject of his marriage must inevitably be referred to, and he dreaded the results. At such a moment this cowardly, selfish, and vicious man did not hesitate to blast the reputation of a woman he professed to love, and whom he knew valued her virtue more than aught else in life ; nor did he shrink from making his friend the innocent accomplice in a scheme of treachery and fraud. He sent for Charles Fox and Mr. Grey to Carlton House, and, referring to the rumour of his marriage, he, according to Lord Brougham, 'most solemnly denied the whole upon his sacred honour.'

Armed with this authority, Charles Fox attended the House of Commons on the subject being resumed, and assured a crowded and excited assembly that the report alluded to by Mr. Rolle was 'a mischievous calumny, a low, malicious falsehood, which had been propagated without doors, and made the wanton sport of the vulgar; a tale fit only to impose upon the lowest orders, a monstrous invention, a report of a fact which had not the smallest degree of foundation, actually impossible to have happened.' Rolle desired to be informed whether Fox had spoken from *direct authority*; a question to which he instantly replied that he had.

Though it was not doubted that he had the prince's sanction to deny the marriage, yet the fact that no one believed the statement that His Royal Highness was not married to Mrs. Fitzherbert sufficiently indicates the regard in which the royal honour was held. But the princely duplicity was not yet complete. According to the Langdale Memoirs, he was the first to announce Fox's denial of their marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert; for which purpose, he called on her early on the morning after the debate, when going

up to her, he took both her hands, and, caressing her in his usual affectionate manner, said,

‘Only conceive, Maria, what Fox did yesterday. He went down to the House and denied that you and I were man and wife. Did you ever hear of such a thing?’

Mrs. Fitzherbert turned pale, and was too much overcome to make an immediate reply. The public, she told her relative, Lord Stourton, supported her by their conduct on this occasion; for at no period of her life were their visits so numerous as the day following the denial. The bell and the knocker of the door were never still, she said, during the day. Nor was Fox allowed to remain long ignorant of the gross deception which his royal friend had so successfully practised on him. In Lord John Russell’s life of that statesman, he says, ‘On the day after Mr. Fox’s declaration, a gentleman of his acquaintance went up to him at Brookes’s, and said, “I see by the papers, Mr. Fox, that you have denied the fact of the marriage of the Prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert. You have been misinformed. I was present at that marriage.”’

It is stated that for twelve months afterwards Fox refused to see the prince.

Meantime, Mrs. Fitzherbert, conscious of the cruel blow her reputation had received, and considering herself publicly compromised, determined to break off all connection with the prince; but he assured her that he was quite blameless concerning what had passed, and now tried to heal, if possible, the wound which his perfidy had given to a sensitive and virtuous woman, whose sole misfortune was her love for him. He sent for Mr. (afterwards Earl) Grey, and pacing up and down the room in a hurried and shame-faced manner, declared that 'Charles had certainly gone too far;' and then, as Lord Grey mentions in a note to Fox's correspondence, he confessed his marriage, and finally asked his friend to explain the matter. Mr. Grey coolly and justly informed the prince the mistake could only be rectified by His Royal Highness speaking to Mr. Fox, and setting him right on such matters as had been misunderstood between them. 'No other person,' he added, 'can be employed without questioning Mr. Fox's veracity; which nobody, I

presume, is prepared to do.' Disappointed and chagrined by this unexpected reply, the prince flung himself on a sofa, saying, 'Well, Sheridan must say something.' Accordingly, Sheridan took an early opportunity of paying a vague compliment in the House of Commons 'to female delicacy,' and declared that ignorance and folly could alone have persevered in attempting to injure the reputation of one whose character was open to no just reproach, and was entitled to the truest and most general respect. With these bland and meaningless compliments, which gave no contradiction to Fox's denial, the matter was allowed to rest. Mrs. Fitzherbert's friends assured her that, in the wide discrepancy between Fox's statements and those of the prince, she was bound to accept her husband's word. Their connection was therefore once more resumed; but during her life she would never consent to see Charles Fox again.

It was now intimated to the prince that if the original motion praying for an income were withdrawn, the king would strive to arrange his debts, which had by this time reached the round sum of £193,648. Accordingly, on His

Royal Highness's gracious compliance, his liabilities were submitted to the inspection of commissioners, appointed by His Majesty. The king finally sent a message to Parliament, declaring he had consented to a further sum of £10,000 being added to His Royal Highness's income, blandly stating that 'he had now to recur to the liberality and attachment of his faithful commons for their assistance on an occasion so interesting (!) to His Majesty's feelings, and to the ease and honour of so distinguished a branch of his royal family.' His Majesty further observed that he 'could not expect or desire the assistance of the House but on a well-grounded expectation that the prince will avoid contracting any debts in future.' The result of this most civil message was that His Royal Highness was voted £161,000 to pay his debts, and £20,000 on account of the unnecessary alterations being made at Carlton House.

After this, a sham peace was effected between the king and his heir, who attended a drawing-room at St. James's, and was paraded like a royal marionnette on the public terrace at Windsor, walking side by side with His Sacred

Majesty, conversing freely and behaving in the eyes of a vast concourse as a right loyal and truly model son.

We must now turn back to the domestic life of the king, which was so quiet and uneventful as to leave but little for the historiographer to narrate. For such glimpses as are obtainable, we are chiefly indebted to the very loyal and pleasant pens of Mrs. Delany and Fanny Burney. The former lady, when introduced to George III. and his family, had reached an advanced age, but still retained much of her mental vigour, and somewhat of that grace and beauty which, in her early days, had rendered her a toast for wits and a theme for poets. This charming and interesting gentlewoman was the widow of a man who had been an able scholar and eloquent preacher in his day. She was, moreover, related to the noble house of Lansdowne; had been maid-of-honour to Queen Anne of godly memory; had enjoyed the friendships of Swift and Pope, of Young, the gifted poet, and Horace Walpole, the accomplished gossip, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the learned traveller, and a host of

other individuals more or less distinguished.

Amongst the few friends of her earlier life who yet survived was Margaret, Duchess of Portland, whose praises had been sung by Swift and Prior, and whose beauty had rendered her a celebrity in her youth. Mrs. Delany and the duchess, who, as Hannah More said, was ‘of the noble and munificent style of the old nobility,’ were fast friends, and it was whilst staying with her Grace at Bulstrode Park, in Buckinghamshire, that she had her first private view of their Gracious Majesties. The king and queen, attended by princes and princesses, and escorted by their attendants, drove in an open chaise, on horseback, and in coaches, making what the dear old lady calls ‘a splendid figure,’ as they approached through the park and galloped into the court in front of the house. The day was as brilliant as even anyone so loyal as the narrator could desire, it being, by the way, the sixteenth birthday of the heir to the throne; and there were the royal family in many coloured costumes, looking as gay as might be, ‘the queen in a hat and an Italian night-gown of purple lutestring trimmed with silver gauze,’

quite graceful and genteel and dignified; the three princesses all in frocks, the king in a uniform of blue and gold, very condescending, and in great good-humour. They all walked into the drawing-room, and through the great apartments, observing everything. Mrs. Delany did not follow in the courtly train, but remained in one of the drawing-rooms to rest; but, when she was missed, Majesty at once sent for her, and she hurried to its august presence as fast as she could travel, whereon the queen said to her, ‘Though I desired you to come, I did not desire you to run and fatigue yourself,’ words which the good old soul to whom they were addressed repeated and treasured up in her courtier’s heart as long as she lived.

‘Then the king and all his royal children and the rest of the train chose to go to the gallery,’ Mrs. Delany says, in all simplicity, ‘where the well-furnished tables were set; one with tea, coffee, and chocolate, another with their proper accompaniments of eatables, rolls, cakes, &c.; another table with fruits and ices, in the utmost perfection, which, with a magical touch, had succeeded a cold repast.’

Indeed, it was all like a fairy tale to good Mrs. Delany; and to make it more so still, the queen sat in the drawing-room, not eating bread and honey, but drinking a dish of tea served her by the duchess. Presently the king and ‘the young royals’ returned, and His Gracious Majesty set a chair for poor, feeble, old Mrs. Delany, who had been standing all the while in the sacred presence of the plain little queen; at which act of courtesy she felt confused, but Her Majesty, turning to her, said, ‘Mrs. Delany, sit down, sit down; it is not everybody that has a chair brought her by a king.’

The climax of the royal graciousness arrived when she was commanded, with the Duchess of Portland, to drink tea at Windsor on the following evening. When they arrived at the hour appointed, the two venerable ladies walked ‘through a large room, with great bay windows, where were all the princesses and youngest princes, with their attendant ladies and gentlemen.’ Then they passed on to the bed-chamber, where they found the queen standing in the middle of the room. At eight o’clock, Their Majesties, with eleven of the princes and prin-

cesses, walked out on the terrace in procession, to the sound of martial music, where the people were waiting to see the royal show, the Duchess of Portsmouth and her friend being left with the Bishop of Lichfield and Lady Weymouth.

'When they returned,' writes Mrs. Delany, 'we were summoned into the next room to tea, and the royals began a ball, and danced two country dances, to the music of French horns, bassoons, and hautboys, which were the same that played on the terrace. The king came up to the Prince of Wales, and said he was sure, when he considered how great an effort it must be to play that kind of music so long a time together, that he would not continue their dancing there, but that the queen and the rest of the company were going to the queen's house, and they should renew their dancing there, and have proper music.' Then Mrs. Delany says she can say no more, for she 'cannot describe the gay and polished appearance of the queen's house, furnished with English manufacture;' and so her narrative of this evening ends in what may be considered silent rapture.

Four months later, she gives another description of the honours she received from their Majesties at Windsor, on the Princess Royal's birthday, which is singularly quaint and not without interest. 'The queen,' she writes to Miss Port of Ilam, who no doubt wished to be favoured with an account of the fashions indulged in by royalty, 'was dressed in an embroidered lutestring; Princess Royal in deep orange or scarlet—I could not by candle-light distinguish which—Princess Augusta in pink; Princess Elizabeth in blue. These were all in robes without aprons. Princess Mary—a most sweet child—was in cherry-coloured tabby, with silver leading-strings. She is about four years old. She could not remember my name, but, making me a very low curtsy, she said, "How do you do, Duchess of Portland's friend? And how does your little niece do? I wish you had brought her." The king carried about in his arms, by turns, Princess Sophia, and the last prince, Octavius, so called being the eighth son.'

Mrs. Delany never saw more lovely children or a more pleasing sight, after which admission,

she goes on, ‘The king brought in his arms the little Prince Octavius to me, who held out his hand to play with me, which, on my taking the liberty to kiss, His Majesty made him kiss my cheek.’ Then there was a concert of vocal and instrumental music, but no supper; and Their Majesties talked to her. Everything was pleasant; everyone was delightful; even the moon, which lit her on her way home through Windsor Great Park, was on that night found unusually brilliant and charming.

Such a favourite did Mrs. Delany become with royalty, that, six years later, in 1785, when she had lost her old and valued friend, the Duchess of Portsmouth, the king presented her with a house close to the royal residence at Windsor, which they furnished, and, furthermore, granted her an annuity of £300 out of the Privy Purse. This kindness was gladly accepted, and, in the September of this year, she took up her residence in her new home, where it was that Their Majesties first saw the famous Fanny Burney. The said Frances was daughter of Dr. Burney, a musical teacher, the reputation of whose works on subjects connected

with his art, together with his talents and his happy temper, brought him much into the polite and literary society of the day. In turn, this polite and literary society graciously gathered beneath the doctor's roof, and unconsciously formed a study to a quiet, retiring child of the house, who, with open eyes and ears, closely noted all that passed before her. The result of this observation was that, in due time, she committed her impressions to paper, and produced a novel destined to be known to the world under the style and title of 'Evelina.' The manuscript was, with many hopes and fears, committed to Dodsley, the publisher, who rejected it, when it was sent to Lowndes, in Fleet Street.

The author gave the name of Grafton, and had her correspondence addressed to the Orange Coffee-house, Miss Burney considering it necessary that her incognita should be strictly preserved. Lowndes offered the delighted young authoress the sum of twenty pounds for her copyright, which was 'accepted with alacrity and boundless surprise at its magnificence;' six months after the book appeared in all the glory

of type in January, 1778. Then, in a little while, came the first burst of appreciation, which presently increased to a whirlwind of success. Reviewers became eulogistic, the public read it with avidity, Edmund Burke remained up all night to finish it, fine ladies wept over its pages, its merits were lauded in drawing-rooms, and its name grew familiar on the lips of all men.

By-and-by it became whispered that Fanny Burney was the authoress of 'Evelina,' and great was her social triumph; she now became what was called a person of distinction, and soon grew acquainted with and made the friendships of many worthy persons, amongst whom was Mrs. Delany; and it was whilst staying with this venerable lady at her house in Windsor, Fanny first came face to face with Majesty. Royalty was in the habit of visiting Mrs. Delany at all hours, and in the most unceremonious manner possible; and Miss Burney had on more than one occasion fled to her own room panic-stricken when the royal knock had thundered at her worthy hostess's door.

It happened, however, that one afternoon when Mrs. Delany had retired for her after-

dinner nap, Miss Burney was in the drawing-room teaching the old lady's little grand-niece a Christmas game, in which some friends who were present joined. They were all in right merry confusion, standing in the middle of the floor, when Mrs. Delany came in to inquire what was going forward. Frances was disentangling herself, when suddenly 'the door of the drawing-room was again opened, and a large man in deep mourning appeared at it, entering and shutting it himself without speaking.' A ghost, she says, could not have more scared her when she discovered, by the star on the large man's breast, that she stood in the sacred presence of royalty. Then Mrs. Delany's niece cried out, 'The king, aunt—the king.' Everyone scampered out of the way, whilst Mrs. Delany advanced to greet His Majesty. The child clung to Fanny, who rapidly retreated to the wall, on thoughts intent of gliding softly out of the room ; but, even as she strove to put her purpose into execution, she, with fluttering heart, heard a loud whisper from the royal lips. 'Is that Miss Burney?' said the king. 'Yes, sir,' said Mrs. Delany. Then he bowed with what the au-

thoress describes as ‘a countenance of the most perfect good-humour,’ whilst she curtsied with reverence most profound. He then asked her, ‘How long have you been come back?’ But her reply was so subdued and her tone so nervous that, alas, it never reached the royal ears. The king now imparted to Mrs. Delany the important information that the Princess Elizabeth was using James’s powders, that she had been blooded twelve times in the last fortnight, and had lost seventy-five ounces of blood, besides undergoing blistering and other discipline; the other children, he said, had whooping-cough, and he had rheumatism. He paid the strictest attention to simple diet, he added, for he ‘preferred eating plain and little to growing diseased and infirm.’

When he had finished these interesting particulars, he told Mrs. Delany that Dr. Burney had repeated to him the whole history of the novel ‘*Evelina*.’ Then he went up abruptly to the trembling authoress, who, as she tells us, could never forget his face while she lived, and said, ‘But what—what—how was it?’

‘Sir!’ cried she, not well understanding him.

‘How came you—how happened it—what—what?’ repeated His Majesty, with interest.

‘I—I only wrote, sir, for my own amusement—only in some odd idle hours,’ she replied.

‘But your publishing—your printing—how was that?’ asks the king, incoherently.

‘That was only, sir—only because——’

The *what* was then repeated with so earnest a look that, forced to say something, she, with ever-increasing confusion, stammeringly answered,

‘I thought, sir, it would look very well in print,’ said the authoress, feeling immediately she had spoken that this was the silliest speech she had ever made in her life. He laughed very heartily, and walked away to enjoy it, crying out, ‘Very fair indeed; that’s being very fair and honest,’ which made Fanny blush all the more.

Presently a violent thunder was made at the door, and a second afterwards the queen herself entered the habitation of worthy Mrs. Delany.

‘Oh, your Majesty is here!’ she cried to the king, making him a curtesy when she set eyes on him.

‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘I ran here without speaking to anybody.’

The queen then spoke to Mrs. Delany, and Miss Burney instantly felt the royal eye on

her face, and she, poor little woman, was about to sink with horrid uncertainty of what she was doing or what she should do; but the king came to her rescue, and she dropped a curtsey to the queen, who returned it civilly enough, and entered into conversation with her. Then Her Majesty spoke of the drawing-room which she had held in town on the previous Thursday in the midst of a dense fog.

‘I assure you, ma’am,’ cried she to Mrs. Delany, ‘it was so dark, there was no seeing anything, and no knowing anybody. And Lady Harcourt could be of no help to tell me who people were; for, when it was light, she can’t see, and now it was dark, I could not see myself. So it was in vain for me to go on in that manner, without knowing which I had spoken to, and which was waiting for me; so I said to Lady Harcourt, “We had better stop, and stand quite still; for I don’t know anybody, no more than you do. But, if we stand still, they will all come up in the end, and we must ask them who they are, and if I have spoken to them yet or not; for it is very odd to do it, but what else can we manage.” So there was standing by me a man that I could

not see in the face, but I saw the twisting of his bow, and said to Lady Harcourt, "I am sure that must be nobody but the Duke of Dorset." "Dear," she says, "how can you tell that?" "Only ask," said I; and so it proved he.'

After more conversation of a like character, the king and queen got into their royal coach, and were driven away to their royal castle, leaving the little groups in Mrs. Delany's drawing-room, marvelling much at their mighty condescension, graciousness, and simplicity.

A few evenings after this, whilst Mrs. Delany, her niece, and Fanny Burney were sitting working in the drawing-room, the door opened, and who steps in once more but the king. They all started up, but he made his hostess resume her place, whilst he told her about the Princess Elizabeth and James' powders again. The conversation soon veered from this young lady, whom His Majesty, it appears, had left 'in a sweet sleep,' to Madame de Genlis and Voltaire, who was voted a monster by the king. Then followed a criticism on Shakespeare, startlingly original and refreshing. 'Was there ever,' cried the royal man, 'such stuff as great part

of Shakespeare ; only one must not say so. But what think you—what—— Is there not sad stuff—what—what ?' Miss Burney ventured to hint that the stuff was mixed with certain excellencies, but was immediately interrupted. 'Oh,' said the king, 'I know it is not to be said, but it's true. Only it's Shakespeare, and nobody dare abuse him ; but one should be stoned for saying so !'

Next morning Miss Burney had a conversation with the queen, during which the royal lady gave her various opinions of several authors and their works. The authoress of 'Adèle,' she informed her new friend, had always sent her books to Her Majesty, even when she did not know there was such a lady as Madame de Genlis. She furthermore added that the 'Sorrows of Werter' was 'done by a bad man for revenge.' The queen then went on to praise a book which she had picked up on an old book-stall. 'Oh, it is amazing what good books there are on stalls,' said Her economical Majesty. 'I don't pick them up myself,' she explained, 'but I have a servant very clever ; and, if they are not to be had

at the booksellers, they are not for me any more than for another.' Her Majesty finished the discourse with a pinch of snuff and a snuffle.

'Mrs. Siddons, the actress,' as Miss Burney speaks of the famous tragedienne, was occasionally summoned to Windsor, to read before royalty. Not only Their Gracious Majesties, but Fanny Burney (who had now become Her Gracious Majesty's dresser) patronized this wife of an ex-theatrical wig-maker.

'She is a woman of excellent character,' writes the afore-mentioned Frances, 'and therefore I am very glad she is thus patronized, since Mrs. Abingdon and so many fair, frail ones have been thus noticed by the great. She behaved with great propriety—very calm, modest, quiet, and unaffected. She has, however, a steadiness in her manner and deportment by no means engaging.'

The royal family went, in solemn state, to see her play *Isabella* in the 'Fatal Marriage,' in October, 1783. Their Majesties witnessed the performance in a box, having a rich canopy of crimson velvet and gold; that under which the Prince of Wales rested was adorned with blue

velvet and silver, and the princess's box was trimmed with blue satin and silver fringe. The dresses of the royal family were in keeping with such theatrical magnificence. His Gracious Majesty wore a suit of 'Quaker-coloured clothes, with gold buttons; the queen, a white satin robe, with a head-dress which was ornamented by a great number of diamonds. The Princess Royal was dressed in a white and blue figured silk, and Princess Augusta in a rose coloured and white silk, of the same pattern as her sister's, having both their head-dresses richly ornamented with diamonds; and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had a suit of dark blue Geneva velvet, richly trimmed with gold lace.' Mrs. Siddons on this occasion exerted her great genius to such a degree that she not only affected her audience, but also the actors who played with her. As for the king, he freely shed tears; her gracious, but more stolid Majesty, however, was less moved; she turned her back upon the stage, and declared the performance 'too disagreeable.'

Henceforth the king declared there was never any player in his time so excellent, 'not Garrick

himself; I own it. What—what—what?’ was the royal acknowledgment of her merit. The queen proved her appreciation of Mrs. Siddons in another way, by appointing her preceptress in English reading to the princesses, omitting, however, to grant a salary with the appointment; but in return for her services she was graciously permitted to hear Her Majesty’s comments delivered in broken English, the actress standing in the royal presence the while, until she was ready to faint from fatigue.

Of one of her readings at Windsor Castle, Mrs. Delany gives a graphic description.

‘Their Majesties,’ writes the old lady, ‘sat in the middle of the first row, with the princesses on each hand, which filled it. The rest of the ladies were seated in the row behind them, and, as there was a space between that and the wall, the lords and gentlemen that were admitted stood there. Mrs. Siddons read standing, and had a desk with candles before her. She behaved with great propriety, and read two acts of “The Provoked Husband,” which was abridged by leaving out Sir Francis and Lady Wronghead’s parts. She also read Queen Catherine’s

last speech in "King Henry VIII." She was allowed three pauses to go into the next room and refresh herself for half an hour each time. After she was dismissed, their Majesties detained the company for some time, to talk over what had passed, which was not the least agreeable part of the entertainment.'

Such are a few of the rare glimpses of the royal domestic life at this period which are afforded us.

In the autumn of 1788, His Majesty's health became variable; his conversations grew more abrupt and rambling than before; a restless nervousness was noticeable in his manner; his moods became strangely changeable; his mind abstracted; and to those who watched him it was evident he was labouring under the first symptoms of an affliction which he in vain sought to overcome and conceal from those around him. This mental malady was preceded by a slight physical illness that gave some alarm to his family. 'He went out in the dew one morning just before his attack,' writes Lord Minto of His Majesty, 'and, instead of changing his shoes and stockings, came to town in them quite wet.'

After the levée, he returned to Kew, where the queen wished him to take something cordial; but Georgy boy liked his own way best, and ate a pear and drank a glass of cold water. He was unwell all the evening, and went to bed at his usual hour. About one in the morning, he was seized violently with a cramp or some other violent thing in the stomach, which rendered him speechless, and, in a word, was *all but*. The queen ran out in great alarm in her shift, or with very little clothes, among the pages, who, seeing her in that situation, were at first retiring out of respect, but the queen stopped them, and sent them instantly for the apothecary at Richmond, who arrived in about forty minutes, during which time the king had continued in the fits and speechless. The apothecary tried to make him swallow something strong, but the king, who appeared not to have lost his senses, still liked a bit of his own way, and rejected by signs everything of that sort. They contrived, however, to cheat him, and got some cordial down in the shape of medicine, and the fit went off. He has been ill ever since, although he has been out and at Court.'

When he had recovered from this, signs of a more distressing malady quickly made their appearance.

On one occasion when Mrs. Siddons had been delighting the royal circle with a recitation, the king suddenly handed her a sheet of paper, which merely contained his signature; at another time, when he attended the weekly levée at St. James's, his disordered dress and vacant manner gave rise to many strange surmises. A little later on, a review at which he was to have been present was deferred, and the royal drawing-rooms were suspended. He complained of want of sleep and rest, and of physical weakness. Meanwhile, he was painfully conscious of his danger. One day he had been out riding, and had remained for hours unusually silent; on returning to Windsor, he hastened through the passages, much agitated, but without looking to right or left, until he reached his own apartments, where, flinging himself down, he burst into tears, and cried out, in a pitiful voice, 'I am going to be mad, and I wish to God that I may die.' But the unhappy climax of this dread malady which had taken possession

of the king had not yet arrived, and, though vague rumours of his illness were rife in town, yet within the precincts of Windsor all was kept as secret as possible.

Miss Burney has left us a vivid picture of this distressing period. His strength seemed diminishing hourly; his countenance was altered strangely; his voice became so hoarse that he could scarcely be heard. 'You see me all at once an old man,' he said to Lady Effingham. 'God send him better,' writes kindly Fanny Burney. The gloom of an impending sorrow hung threateningly over royal Windsor in these early November days, and impressed itself painfully on all the household. The queen, overpowered with secret terror, strove to maintain her calmness, but, when left alone, sought relief in violent bursts of tears; doctors passed noiselessly to and fro, looking sad and hopeless. The king was now kept in the greatest seclusion; the Prince of Wales drove up from Brighton, where he had been spending his days in scandalous dissipation; all music was forbidden, and the musicians ordered away; gentlemen of the household stood in silent groups in the chambers,

thoughtful and gloomy, as if awaiting the announcement of death; and throughout the household an ominous atmosphere of depression reigned unbroken.

‘Nobody stirred,’ writes Miss Burney. ‘Not a voice was heard, not a step, not a motion. I could do nothing but watch, without knowing for what. There seemed a strangeness in the house most extraordinary.’

At last the long-dreaded moment came. The royal family were dining in seclusion, when suddenly the king broke out in a frenzy, flew at the Prince of Wales, and, seizing him by the throat, thrust him against the wall. From that hour it was no longer a secret that the king was mad.

CHAPTER VII.

Old Wits in the New Reign—My Lord Chesterfield in his Last Days—Rehearsing his Funeral—His Courtesy Strong in Death—Remarkable Will—At Strawberry Hill—Walpole's Amiable and Polished Manner—Reads his Tragedy to a bevy of Fine Ladies—His Contempt for Men of Letters—Chatterton Writes to Him—Fight for Bread, and Death by Poison—At the First Academy Dinner—Kitty Clive at Strawberry—The Misses Berry—Walpole's Last Days.

MANY of the distinguished men and women, whose wit and talent had served to render the social life during the last reign one of unusual brilliancy, had passed away before the third of the Georges ascended the throne. Little Mr. Pope was quietly sleeping in the aisle of Twickenham Church; 'Hervey the handsome,' cynic, courtier, and satirist, whom the poet detested and virulently abused, had gone where no bitter words could reach him; Sir Godfrey Kneller had laid down his brush

for ever; poor Swift had ended his melancholy days in madness; Bolingbroke, politician and wit, was missing from many social boards; so also was Gay; and the beautiful Countess of Coventry, who had hastened her demise by smearing her face with paint, had closed her eyes on the vanities of this world ere the new king was proclaimed. But my Lord Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, and George Selwyn, three men of excellent wit, still happily survived; so also, but for a brief time, did my Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; and Lady Hervey, otherwise Molly Lapell, the once charming maid of honour, now styled by Lord Carlisle ‘the most impertinent old brimstone,’ enlivened the not too melancholy days of her widowhood by giving charming little French dinners to the choicest spirits of the town.

My Lord Chesterfield, once loved for his wit and feared for his satire, now lived much retired; new men bore old names once familiar on his lips; unknown faces met his gaze in club and drawing-room, and manners had somewhat changed their form since his younger days. The ‘lord amongst wits’ lived chiefly in the mag-

nificent mansion he had erected and named Chesterfield House, spending the greater part of his days in the seclusion of his library, which he boasted was the finest room in London. Rooms are more or less characteristic of those who dwell in them, and Lord Chesterfield's library was eminently a refined and stately apartment. 'The walls were covered half way up with rich and classical stores of literature; above the cases were, in close series, the portraits of eminent authors, French and English, with most of whom he had conversed; over these, and immediately under the massive cornice, extended all round in foot-long capitals the Horatian lines:

'Nunc . veterum . libris .

Nunc . somno . et . inertibus . Horis .

Lucen . solicter . jucunda . oblivia . vitea.'

On the mantel-pieces and cabinets stood busts of old orators, interspersed with voluptuous vases and bronzes, antique or Italian, and airy statuettes in marble or alabaster, of nude or semi-nude opera nymphs.'

My lord was now, as he said to his friend Dayrolles, in his grand climacteric, which he declared he would not live to complete.

‘Fontenelle’s last words at a hundred and three,’ he wrote, ‘were, “*Je souffre d’être* ;” deaf and infirm as I am, I can with truth say the same thing at sixty-three. In my mind, it is only the strength of our passions and the weakness of our reason that make us so fond of life ; but, when the former subside and give way to the latter, we grow weary of being, and willing to withdraw.’

Dayrolles, to whom these words were addressed, was one of those useful friends who always hang on to great men. He had spent many years of his life in the service of this illustrious earl, who, when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, ‘made him Black Rod, and gave the ingenious reason that he had a black face,’ as Horace Walpole pleasantly writes.

Though Lord Chesterfield’s manner was what has been described as ‘exquisitely elegant’ and polished to the highest degree, yet it failed oftentimes to give those he intended to impress most, a belief in his sincerity. ‘Garrick was pure gold, but beat out to thin leaf,’ said Boswell, epigrammatically, ‘but Chesterfield was tinsel,’ to which opinion Dr. Johnson agreed,

for the burly philosopher had ceased to hold him in esteem since the occurrence of their quarrel, the story of which forms one of the most interesting pages in the history of literature.

Johnson, before commencing his dictionary, dedicated the 'plan' of it to my Lord Chesterfield, who was then regarded as a distinguished patron of letters; the noble earl highly approved of this, and made some useful suggestions which Johnson adopted. It was then the fashion for dedications to be paid for, and my lord sent Johnson £10, after which he paid no further attention to the struggling man of letters. He had neglected Garrick, he ignored Sheridan, and behaved to Johnson 'in such a manner,' Boswell says, 'as to excite his contempt and indignation.' But there was probably a stronger reason to rouse these feelings in the great lexicographer than mere neglect. A story which gained general belief amongst Johnson's friends, and which was authenticated by Lord Lyttelton and Sir John Hawkins, stated that Johnson, on the occasion of a visit to the polite earl, was kept waiting in the ante-chamber a considerable

time, the reason being assigned that his lordship had company with him. At last the door opened, and out came old Colley Cibber, when Johnson, seeing for whom he had been excluded from his patron's presence, went away in a violent passion, vowing he would return no more.

'Cibber,' said Lord Lyttelton, 'who had been introduced familiarly by the back stairs' (alas, for the days of literary patronage), 'had probably not been there more than ten minutes.'

Johnson denied the truth of this story, and declared stoutly 'his lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him.' However, a reference in his letter to his 'waiting in his (Lord Chesterfield's) outer rooms,' would seem to imply there was some foundation for the anecdote. When the dictionary drew near its conclusion, the earl, who flattered himself Johnson would dedicate his great work to him, wrote some letters to the *World*, in which, amongst other fine compliments, he declared the public in general and the republic of letters in particular, were greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson for having undertaken and executed so great and desirable a work.

‘And I hereby declare,’ he said, with that touching humility which greatness can afford, ‘that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship.’

This praise failed to have the effect desired by the noble earl of conciliating the said Mr. Johnson.

‘When my dictionary was coming out,’ said he, speaking of Lord Chesterfield, ‘he fell ascribing in the *World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter.’

This, for vigour, style, and expression of independence, is perhaps unequalled by any epistle in our language, and, as it is too often quoted only partially, we give it entire:—

To the Earl of Chesterfield.

‘MY LORD,

‘I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the *World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I

know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge. When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending. But I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little. Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. The

shepherd in "Virgil" grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

'Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself. Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

'My lord, your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.'

Some rumour of this letter and its contents

got abroad, and all men of independent spirit approved of Johnson's conduct. But Dodsley, the publisher, was not among these; he had a share in the dictionary, and believed the noble earl's patronage might be of consequence. He told his friend, Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shown him the letter.

'I should have imagined,' replied Dr. Adams, 'that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it.'

'Pooh!' said the bookseller, with extreme contempt, 'do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, sir. It lay upon his table, where anybody might see it. He read it to me; said, "This man has great powers," pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed.'

In this manner, the noble lord cleverly concealed the bitterness he felt, and to which he afterwards gave vent in portraying Johnson in the character of the 'respectable Hottentot.'

Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson on his severity; his lordship, he said, 'would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome.'

‘Sir,’ said Johnson, ‘that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing.’

‘No,’ said Dr. Adams; ‘there is one person at least as proud. I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two.’

‘But mine,’ replied Johnson, ‘was *defensive* pride.’

Though my lord failed to gain the good graces of one whom he slighted as a literary hack, his politeness to the *beau monde* continued to the last. According to Walpole, the earl ‘took no less pains to be the phoenix of fine gentlemen than Tully did to qualify himself as an orator. Both succeeded,’ says Horace, with a quiet sneer. ‘Tully immortalized his name; Chesterfield’s reign lasted a little longer than that of a fashionable beauty.’

A short time before the worthy lord’s days closed, Monsieur Suard expressed a desire to see *l’homme le plus aimable, le plus poli, et le plus spirituel des trois royaumes*. Alas! he found but a shattered old man. ‘It is very sad to be deaf when one would so much enjoy listening,’ said my lord, courteous to the last. His visitor shortened his stay, fearful of fatiguing his most polite

host. 'I do not detain you,' said the earl, cheerfully, 'for I must go and rehearse my funeral.' In this manner he referred to his daily drives. A short time before his death, being asked how a contemporary of his did, he said, 'To tell you the truth, we have both been dead this twelve-month, but we do not own it.' Another proof that his old sense of wit had not departed from him at the close of his life, may be mentioned. His sister, Lady Gertrude Hotham, who had become a strict methodist, under the guidance of her friend, Lady Huntingdon, becoming anxious concerning the safety of his soul, conceived a scheme of luring him down to one of her seminaries in Wales. When she visited him, she, together with Lady Huntingdon, said nothing of their pious motives, but enlarged on the benefit the air would secure him, and the general delight which the scenery would afford him, the views were so charming, the mountains so sublime. 'No, ladies,' said my lord, with a knowing smile. 'I do not love such tremendous prospects. When the faith of your ladyships has removed the mountain, I will go to Wales with all my heart.' Later on his wife,

Melusina—the daughter of George I. and the infamous old Duchess of Kendal—who had grown religious, sent for the Rev. Rowland Hill, but my lord refused to see the good man, much to my lady's distress, who afterwards consoled herself by appointing the Rev. Rowland, whose eloquence she vastly admired, as her chaplain, when he preached to pious assemblies at Chesterfield House. When, in March 1773, the earl lay in the agonies of death, his old friend Dayrolles entered the room softly; but my lord heard him, and, turning to his valet, gasped out the words, 'Give Dayrolles a chair.' The ruling trait of courtesy was strong in death.

My lord made a remarkable will, in which he declared that, 'satiated with the pompous follies of this life, of which I have had an uncommon share, I would have no posthumous ones displayed of my funeral, and therefore desire to be buried in the next burying-place to the place where I shall die, and limit the whole expense of my funeral to £100.'

He bequeathed his property to his godson, Philip Stanhope, on whom he thought it necessary to place certain restraints.

‘In case my said godson, Philip Stanhope,’ he said, ‘shall at any time hereinafter keep, or be concerned in keeping of, any race-horses or packs of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill-manners, during the course of the races there, or shall resort to the said races, or shall lose in any one day, at any one game or bet whatsoever, the sum of £500, then, in any the cases aforesaid, it is my express will that he, my said godson, shall forfeit and pay, out of my estate, the sum of £5,000 to and for the use of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.’

The earl died satisfied with the belief that he could, as he said, ‘trust to the want of lenity’ of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. But there was yet a better clause in his will. To his servants he left two years’ wages. ‘I consider them,’ said my lord, ‘as unfortunate friends; my equals by nature, and my inferiors only in the difference of our fortunes.’ This was perhaps one of the most gracious sentences to which the noble courtier ever gave expression.

A friend and contemporary of Chesterfield’s, Horace Walpole, survived him almost twenty

years. This amiable cynic, to whose facile pen we owe such delightful glimpses of social life in the eighteenth century, now lived in elegant ease at Strawberry Hill, in the Gothic Castle, which had taken him twenty-three years to complete. He speaks of it as the prettiest bauble possible, 'set in enamelled meadows in filigree hedges.' To this court by the placid Thames, ruled over by one whose word was omnipotent in all things connected with art and literature, came a throng of noble lords and ladies fine, princes, poets, and players, authors and artists, philosophers, adventurers, literary hacks, wits, and even royalty itself. For each of these Horace had an appropriate word, a graceful bow, a pleasant smile, and delighted all of them with his gentle, affable manners.

'Not the smallest hauteur or consciousness of rank appeared in his familiar conferences,' says the editor of *Walpoliana*, 'and he was ever eager to dissipate any constraint that might occur, as imposing a constraint upon himself, and knowing that any such chain enfeebles and almost annihilates the mental powers. Endued with exquisite sensibility, his wit never gave the

smallest wound, even to the grossest ignorance of the world, or the most morbid hypochondriac bashfulness.'

The owner of Strawberry Hill—which he called an inn, the sign of the Gothic Castle—was never so happy as when showing a batch of visitors through his wonderful rooms, which were stored with objects of art gathered from every quarter of the globe; his tall, lank figure bowing as he gave utterance to a finely polished phrase, or received some pretty compliment on the justness of his taste; his dark, penetrating eyes lighting up the unhealthy pallor of his face. He was seldom without visitors eager to see his curiosities.

'I have given my assembly to show my Gallery, and it was glorious,' he writes, 'but, happening to pitch upon the feast of tabernacles, none of my Jews could come, though Mrs. Clive proposed to them to change their religion; so I am forced to exhibit once more. For the morning spectators, the crowd augments, instead of diminishing. It is really true that Lady Hertford called here t'other morning, and I was reduced to bring her by the back gate into the

kitchen ; the house was so full of company that came to see the Gallery, that I had nowhere else to carry her.'

With what pleasant pride he would point to Cavalini's wondrous shrine in mosaic, that had stood above the sepulchre of four holy martyrs in the Church of St. Mary Maggiore in Rome ; to Torregiano's famous bust of Henry VIII. ; to the armour of Francis I., or to the famous collection of portraits in his gallery ; and with what delight he would read some specially favoured visitors a page from his manuscripts, or a poem set up by his own hands, fresh from his press. Here one day he read his 'tragedy of the highest order,' to quote the author of 'Don Juan,' 'The Mysterious Mother,' to a trio of fair and favourite ladies, assembled for the purpose—to wit, Lady Aylesbury, Lady Lyttelton, and Miss Rich ; what terms of graceful appreciation they must have uttered, what courtly compliments they must have paid him, all of which he accepted as his due, for he entertained no poor opinion of his work.

'I am not yet intoxicated enough with it,' he writes of the tragedy, 'to think it would do for

the stage, though I wish to see it acted ; but, as Mrs. Pritchard leaves the stage next month; I know nobody could play the Countess; nor am I disposed to expose myself to the impertinences of that jackanapes Garrick, who lets nothing appear but his own wretched stuff, or that of creatures still duller, who suffer him to alter their pieces as he pleases.'

Though 'the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language,' as Lord Byron styles him, condescended to become an author by way of passing his elegant leisure, or diverting his friends, he looked with an ill-concealed contempt on men of letters by profession, which he did not care to disguise. 'I shun authors,' he wrote, 'and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at these things, and divert myself.'

Through his long life he never extended encouragement or help to one of the struggling herd, and his neglect of Chatterton must ever stand as a reproach to his memory.

In 1769, the marvellous boy wrote to the polite and learned Mr. Walpole offering to furnish him with some account of eminent painters who had lived in Bristol, and enclosing some specimens of old poems, which he avowed he had discovered in an ancient chest in St. Mary Redcliffe's Church, of which his uncle was sexton. This edifice was rebuilt in the reign of Edward IV. by one Thomas Canynge, merchant, who, with his friend Thomas Rowley, a priest, Chatterton stated, had written the poems in question. The ingenious story was solely the fabrication of a highly imaginative boy, then in his seventeenth year, and the verses were the most extraordinary forgeries in the chronicles of literature. Chatterton also begged Walpole to help him to free himself from the drudgery of his employment as apprentice to a scrivener, a labour abhorrent to his temperament, and from which he longed to escape.

At first Horace believed the quaint poems, writ on strips of vellum, were the genuine productions of a past age, until his friends, Gray and Mason, poets both, laughed at his credulity, when indignant at the deception sought to

be practised upon him, he sent a cold, chiding letter to the boy poet. Chatterton wrote demanding the poems, which Walpole had forgotten to enclose; they were then returned, but without a line. In a little while the young poet forced his way into the great wilderness of London, full of high hopes and great ambitions, anxious, with the ready impulse of youth, to commence that battle for literary fame which was so soon to end in despair and death.

‘I get four guineas a month by one magazine,’ he wrote, in the first flush of his hopes, to his poor mother in Bristol; ‘shall engage to write a history of England and other pieces, which will more than double that sum. Occasional essays for the daily papers would more than support me. What a glorious prospect . . . I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-house, and know all the geniuses there . . . Bristol’s mercenary walls were never destined to hold me—there I was out of my element; now in it. London! Good God! how superior is London to that despicable place, Bristol!’

Poor boy, his fight for daily bread was vigorous, though brief. He got two shillings for a

newspaper article, wrote sixteen songs for ten and sixpence, sent articles to magazines, and, whilst starving, wrote a burlesque burletta—think of the irony of such a fate. For four months he struggled before giving up all hope, living on a halfpenny roll or a penny tart a day, with perhaps an occasional sheep's tongue. Youth is strong and hunger slow to kill, but at last the end came; he had remained for three days without food; on the morning of the fourth day he was discovered dead in a wretched garret of a house in a little street out of Holborn, with the cup which held the arsenic and water he had drunk, clutched in his hand. He did not live to complete his eighteenth year.

The first intimation Walpole received of his death was whilst he was present at the first Academy dinner, surrounded by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith, Johnson, Burke, and other luminaries. Goldsmith commenced to speak of the Rowley poems, and presently Walpole asked about Chatterton, when honest Oliver told him regretfully the lad had destroyed himself. He was startled, and perhaps conscience stricken. 'The persons of honour and

veracity who were present,' he wrote afterwards, 'will attest with what surprise and concern I thus first heard of his death.'

But no doubt he soon forgot this painful occurrence in an existence constantly busy with the small things of life and brightened by the society of so many remarkable friends; for not only were his visitors pleasant and distinguished, but so were his immediate neighbours. The Countess of Suffolk, the famous mistress of George II., spent her last days, which were included in the first decade of the new reign, in the seclusion of Marble Hill, which was later on occupied by Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife of George IV.; her eccentric Grace of Queensbury, the friend of Swift and patroness of Gay, was merely divided from him by the gentle waters of the Thames; that charming actress and fascinating woman, Mrs. Abingdon, dwelt at Twickenham, and the lively Kitty Clive, together with her brother, lived in a house on Walpole's property, which he was pleased to facetiously call Cliveden.

'I have quitted the stage, and Clive is preparing to leave it,' he wrote to George Montagu. 'We shall neither of us ever be grave; dowagers

roost all round us, and you could never want cards or mirth.'

Mrs. Clive indeed wrote to her friend Colman that 'vexation and fretting in the theatre are the foundation of all Billou's complaints.' She declared she spoke 'by expeariance,' and that she was fretted by managers 'till my gaul overflow'd like the river Nile;' she therefore sought timely repose in Twickenham. Walpole thoroughly appreciated the society of Mistress Clive, who had, according to Goldsmith, more true humour than any actor or actress on the English stage.

'All the morning I play with my workmen or animals,' he writes, 'go regularly every morning to the meadows with Mrs. Clive, or sit with my Lady Suffolk, and at night I scribble.'

The actress's name often occurs in his letters, and ever in a pleasant and gracious manner. 'Strawberry is in perfection,' he writes to his friend George Montagu; 'the verdure has all the bloom of spring, the orange trees are loaded with blossoms, the Gallery all sun and gold, Mrs. Clive all sun and vermillion.'

In the year 1785, the merry hearted actress quitted this world's stage for ever.

‘My poor old friend is a great loss,’ Walpole wrote. He had played cards with her but a few nights before; then she caught cold. ‘On the Wednesday morning she rose to have her bed made, and whilst sitting on it, with her maid by her, sunk down at once, and died without a pang or a groan.’

Some time after her death, Cliveden had new tenants in the persons of Mr. Berry and his two daughters, gentle and amiable women, who in good time became his most valued friends. Mary’s countenance he describes as pale, with dark eyes, and an interesting expression; she was ‘an angel inside and out.’ Agnes, the younger, was ‘hardly to be called handsome, but almost,’ and they dressed, he adds, ‘within the bounds of fashion, but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons.’ The elder understood Latin and spoke French fluently; the younger was an artist. It was not, however, on account of their accomplishments, so much as their quiet and graceful manners, that Horace Walpole became interested in them; there was, moreover, a story connected with

their family that had a flavour of romance, which was in itself a rare charm to one whom knowledge of the world had made a cynic.

The grandfather of these ladies had an estate of £5,000 a year, but disinherited his son because he had married a penniless woman. She died after giving birth to two daughters, and the grandfather, desiring an heir male, pressed the widower to marry again. This he refused to do; he remained true to the memory of his first wife, and devoted his days to the education of his daughters. The property was therefore made over to the second son, who allowed his brother £800 a year, a sum that enabled him to take the two girls to the Continent, where they received an education which rendered them accomplished women.

To each of them Horace Walpole successively offered his hand, which neither of them accepted, though there was then a probability, which afterwards became a certainty, that such a marriage would raise his wife to the peerage; but their refusal did not prevent them from sharing the solitude of his later years, and he was seldom more happy than when in the

society of his 'two Straw Berries,' as he named them.

For many years previous to his death, he suffered a martyrdom from gout and the ills of old age; yet, though his hands and feet were crippled, his spirits were always gay, and his wit retained all its old brilliancy. When able to hold a pen in his hand, he continued to correspond with his friends, a pastime that afforded him almost as much delight as it did those he favoured with his celebrated letters. He rose late, passed the forenoon in his gardens, or in reading; then dined sparingly off chicken, pheasant, or any light food, seldom drinking wine; his favourite beverage being ice-water, which stood in a decanter placed in a pail of ice under the table. After dinner he was assisted upstairs to the library by his valet; being now unable to enter a room 'in that style of affected delicacy' of which Miss Hawkins speaks, '*chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it—or under his arm—knees bent and feet on the tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor.'

In the library, enriched with rare and hand-

somely bound volumes, crowded with objects of art, and fragrant with carraway or orange-trees in bloom, coffee was served; and here Horace, lying on a couch, conversed with his charming neighbours, detailing, in his vivacious manner, some recent town gossip, or relating to them remarkable anecdotes of men and women of note whom he had known in former reigns. After dinner he touched no more food for the day; but ‘the snuff-box of *tabac d’étrennes* from Fribourgs was not forgotten, and was replenished from a canister lodged in an ancient marble urn of great thickness, which stood in the window-seat, and served to secure its moisture and rich flavour.’ He wore his age with dignity and cheerfulness; nay, he even jested at his weight of years.

‘Since all my fingers are useless, and that I have only six hairs left, I am not very much grieved at not being able to comb my head,’ he writes; and presently, when, by the death of his nephew, he became a peer of the realm, he supposed he would be styled Lord Methusalem. To be within convenient reach of his doctors, he left Strawberry Hill—the work of so many years,

the realization of so many hopes, the subject of so much gossip, the scene where so many illustrious visitors had gathered—never to see it again. He moved to Berkeley Square, from where he wrote to the Countess of Ossory, a couple of months before his death :

‘I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows anything, and what I learn comes from newspapers that collect intelligence from coffee-houses ; consequently what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about four-score nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me about once a year, to stare at me as the Methusalem of the family, and they can only speak of their own contemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls.’

During the last weeks of his life, the wit which had enlivened two generations dwindled into darkness. He died on March 2, 1797, in the eightieth year of his age.

CHAPTER VIII.

George Selwyn Morbid and Tender-hearted—Dr. Dodd—
 The Marchese Fagniani—Topham Beauclerk and Dr.
 Johnson—A Morning's Adventure—Lady Diana and
 her Spouse—Nancy Parsons and the Duke of Grafton
 —Further Adventures of Nancy—Lord Maynard—
 Mad Tom Hervey and his Letters—Elopement of
 Lady Susan Strangways with an Actor—Marriage of
 Lady Henrietta Wentworth and her Footman.

THOUGH Walpole hated many and liked few,
 he declared he 'really loved' George Sel-
 wyn, 'not only for his infinite wit, but for a
 thousand good qualities;' and this appreciation
 was shared by all who knew Selwyn. Witty,
 eccentric, at once a lover of horrors and of
 little children, a man about town, an exquisite
 beau, his various-sided character presented an
 anomaly which puzzled many. He was a cour-
 tier, a frequenter of all fashionable assemblies,
 and a member of many clubs. His friends in-

deed were legion, and his name was ever on their lips and in their letters ; repeating a choice specimen of his wit or repartee, recounting some eccentric escapade, or dwelling on those traits of good fellowship which rendered him loved by all. His humour was not of that flagrant description destined to set a table in a roar, but rather vented itself in neat, pointed phrases, which were uttered with a quaintness and simplicity of facial expression that added considerably to their effect ; a few examples selected from an abundant collection preserved by Walpole will suffice to show their general style.

One day when he, who 'had a passion for seeing coffins, corpses, and executions,' was asked why he had not been present to witness the death of Charles Fox, a malefactor who ended his evil days on the gallows, he calmly replied that he made a point of never going to rehearsals. He made another joke against his personal friend Fox when a public subscription was spoken of, for the purpose of paying his debts ; some one speaking to Selwyn on the subject wondered 'how Fox would take it.'

‘Take it!’ replied George, promptly, ‘why, *quarterly*, of course.’ The statesman, indeed, was often the subject of that ready wit, always sparkling, though never severe, which he did not the less appreciate for its being personal. Once at Brookes’ Club, Fox was speaking of the successful peace he had made with France, and boasted that he had induced that country to give up the gum trade to England. ‘That, Charles, I am not at all surprised at,’ replied Selwyn; ‘for, having drawn your teeth, they would be damned fools to trouble about your *gums*.’

One more saying of his regarding Sir Joshua Reynolds is worth repeating. When it was reported that the great painter was to stand for Plympton at the next election, the fine gentlemen laughed and made merry at the idea of an artist presuming to offer himself as a representative for parliamentary honours. ‘He is not to be laughed at, however,’ said George, in his most solemn tone; ‘he may very well succeed in being elected, for Sir Joshua is the ablest man I know on a canvas!’

White’s Club was the chief rendezvous of

Selwyn and his jovial friends, Charles Fox, Gilly Williams, Charles Townshend, Dick Edgcombe, Topham Beauclerk, and Rigby, ‘an excellent *bon vivant*, having all the gibes and gambols and flashes of merriment which set the table in a roar.’ Here in the last reign my Lord Chesterfield had gambled, Bubb Dodington had babbled of his intimacy with Frederick Prince of Wales,—who borrowed large sums from his dupe and then laughed at him,—and old Colley Cibber, poet-laureate and player, ‘feasted most sumptuously with Mr. Victor and his wife, and gave a trifle for his dinner;’ and here in the present reign, wits, politicians, and beaux made ludicrous bets, drank deep, and half ruined themselves over dice and cards.

It was at White’s that ‘a waiter came up to Selwyn one day in a hurried manner and whispered to him confidentially, ‘Mr. Walpole’s compliments, and he has got a housebreaker for you;’ at which news the wit started up and hastened with all speed to his friend, who had such a rare treat in store for him. Selwyn’s love of criminals was indeed well known, and he seldom lost an opportunity of visiting them in

prison, or being present at their executions. His morbid love for these exhibitions carried him on one occasion so far as Paris, where he went to behold Damiens, who had attempted the assassination of Louis XV., torn with red-hot pincers, and finally rent in quarters by four horses. On the day of the execution, Selwyn plainly dressed to avoid notice, mingled with the crowd, but managed to get close to the scaffold, when the executioner, noticing and recognising him, cried out, ‘Make way for monsieur; he is an English amateur.’ The deaths of criminals in merry England were invariably witnessed by enormous numbers, for whom balconies and stands were erected; and these crowds were not only composed of the middle and lower classes, who regarded such sights as interesting tragedies provided by Providence for their better amusement, but by large contingents of fine gentlemen and ladies of high degree.

Such exhibitions were, however, occasionally rendered revolting by the general air of festivity with which they were accompanied. Sometimes the criminals on their way to execution exchanged jests and witticisms with the crowd, or decked

themselves with ribbons and flowers, to indicate that they met their fate with a brave front. When Elizabeth Herring, in 1773, was sentenced to be strangled and burned for the murder of her husband, she was conveyed to Tyburn in a hurdle drawn by four horses gaily decked with streamers and ornamented with the boughs of trees and garlands of evergreens. Selwyn considered life worth living for the purpose of witnessing such tragedies, and, whenever one of them took place during his unavoidable absence from town, his friends were certain to write him a full account of the proceedings.

‘Lord Harrington’s porter,’ who, by the way, rejoiced in the name of Whisket, ‘was condemned yesterday,’ writes Gilly Williams to the wit. ‘Cadogan and I have already bespoken places at the Brazier’s, and I hope Parson Digby will come time enough to be of the party. I presume we shall have your honour’s company, if your stomach is not too squeamish for a single swing.’ Subsequently the same writer adds, ‘I give a breakfast on Wednesday next, the morning the porter makes his exit. If Parson Digby is in town, I shall send him a card; he is our Ordinary on all these great occasions.’

This criminal, whose exit was looked forward to with such evident relish, had robbed his master of £3,000, and his trial caused a considerable sensation in town. George Selwyn was in Paris at the time, but received a description of the tragedy from the Hon. Henry St. John, a beau whom his friends, in reference to his name, irreverently called 'the Baptist.'

'I should not,' said this individual, 'have intruded on the gay moments you now pass your time in, had not my brother intimated to me your obliging request of hearing from me; and what served to encourage my writing was the curiosity which you expressed to hear of Whisket's execution, which my brother and I went to see, at the risk of breaking our necks by climbing up an old rotten scaffolding, which I feared would tumble before the cart drove off with the six malefactors. However, we escaped, and had a full view of Mr. Whisket, who went to the gallows with a white cockade in his hat, as an emblem of his innocence, and died with the same hardness as appeared through his whole trial. I hope you have had good sport at the *Place de Grève*' (the scene of criminal execu-

tions in Paris at that time) 'to make up for losing the sight of the execution of so notorious a villain as Lord Harrington's porter.'

Gilly Williams, who, with his friends, enjoyed himself on the occasion, wrote Selwyn a few minor particulars. 'The dog died game,' he says; 'went in the cart in a blue and gold frock, and, as an emblem of innocence, had a white cockade in his hat. He ate several oranges in his passage, inquired if his hearse was ready, and then, as old Rowe used to say, was launched into eternity.'

Another interesting execution which George Selwyn was prevented by absence from attending was that of Dr. Dodd, a graphic account of which, however, was duly forwarded him. Dr. Dodd was a celebrated and fashionable preacher, who married a woman who may be said to have had aristocratic connections; one of these, Lord Sandwich, was her professed lover; this little fact, however, was overlooked by the learned divine, who was not over-strict in his morals or prejudices, and who hoped by this alliance to gain my lord's interest, and so forward his own ambitious views. The doctor

had luxurious tastes, and was a man of pleasure and gallantry, whose eloquence in the pulpit was only equalled by his social and eminently fascinating qualities in society; moreover, he was the founder of a charity for discharging prisoners confined for debts, and the promoter of many others equally merciful. His numerous good traits rendered him an especial favourite with the fair sex, and his piety was accounted sufficiently exalted to gain him an appointment as one of the chaplains whose discourses were destined to edify royal ears. But his income, though aided by the contributions of pious matrons and others, whom his ministrations much comforted, was by no means sufficient to meet his expenses, which were considerable, or to satisfy his ambitions, which were great. He was, however, a man possessing so much ingenuity that it ultimately led him not only into temptation, but to the gallows.

An instance of his peculiar talent occurred when there was a vacancy in the rectory of St. George's, Hanover Square; the nomination lay in the power of Lady Apsley, wife to the Lord Chancellor, to whom Dr. Dodd wrote anonymous-

ly, offering her the sum of £3,000 if he were appointed rector. This proposal, if made during the previous two reigns, would have been regarded as a fair piece of business, and the divine would have gained the post if no other reverend gentleman outbid him, but now it was quite different; matters ecclesiastical were dealt with in another way. Therefore my lady handed the letter to her lord, who in turn showed it to his king, whereon His Majesty, in great wrath, struck the name of this light of the church, to whom the epistle was traced, off the list of his royal chaplains.

He survived the royal displeasure—unfortunately; and indeed so little heeded the warning which this indiscretion should have given him, that in an evil hour, whilst beset with debt and difficulties, he forged a draught for £4,200 on young Lord Chesterfield, whose tutor he had been; this was quickly found out, when he was arrested and brought to justice. The discovery may have been hastened by the fact that he had on a former occasion been mixed up with a little money matter by which he had striven to benefit himself; this was when my Lord

Chesterfield gave him a bond of £1,000 for a lady whose society he no longer desired ; the doctor obligingly cashed the bill, gave the fair one £100, and kept £900 for his trouble.

At his trial for forgery he fainted, confessed his guilt, expressed his love of life and his hope for pardon, and betrayed agonies of grief and fear. The Bishop of Bristol, who, it may be noted, was by no means so famous for his eloquence as the guilty doctor, declared, with episcopal mercy, he was sorry the wretched man should be hanged ‘for the least crime he ever committed.’

The doctor’s fair devotees were more humane ; they set forth his charities, his learning, his courtesy, and his eloquence, which they had never been able to withstand ; the Methodists, with whom he had been connected, also took up his cause with zeal ; prayed for his safe deliverance, and, when their prayers had no avail with heaven, besought the throne to spare his life. However, on this occasion the throne proved deaf to their address, and sentence of death was passed on Dr. Dodd. But the Methodists did not yet despair ; again they begged the royal

mercy in a petition signed by twenty-three thousand persons; the king remained unmoved, and justice took its unflinching way. Anthony Morris Storer forwarded the minute details of the execution to George Selwyn, and his letter gives an apt illustration of the period.

‘I should be very inclinable to obey your commands which Lord March delivered me,’ says this worthy correspondent, ‘respecting the fate of the unfortunate divine, but though an eye-witness of his execution, as I never was at one before, I hardly know what to say respecting his behaviour. Upon the whole, the piece was not very full of events. The doctor, to all appearance, was rendered perfectly stupid from despair. His hat was flapped all round, and pulled over his eyes, which were never directed to any object around, nor even raised, except now and then lifted up in the course of his prayers. He came in a coach, and a very heavy shower of rain fell just upon his entering the cart, and another just at his putting on his night-cap.

‘He was a very considerable time in praying, which some people standing about seemed

rather tired with ; they rather wished for some more interesting part of the tragedy. The wind, which was high, blew off his hat, which rather embarrassed him, and discovered to us his countenance, which we could scarcely see before. His hat, however, was soon restored to him, and he went on with his prayers. There were two clergymen attending him, one of whom seemed very much affected. The other, I suppose, was the Ordinary of Newgate, as he was perfectly indifferent and unfeeling in everything that he said and did. The executioner took both the hat and wig off at the same time. Why he put on his wig again, I do not know, but he did, and the doctor took off his wig a second time, and then tied on a night-cap, which did not fit him ; but whether he stretched that, or took another, I could not perceive. He then put on his night-cap himself, and upon his taking it he certainly had a smile on his countenance, and very soon afterwards there was an end of all his hopes and fears on this side the grave. He never moved from the first place he took in the cart ; seemed absorbed

in despair, and utterly dejected, without any other signs of animation but in praying. A vast number of people were collected, as you may imagine.'

The love and tenderness which Selwyn betrayed for the children of his friends was a singular contrast to his delight in things morbid. His affection was especially shown to two children, one of whom was Anne, daughter of the Countess of Coventry, the once beautiful Maria Gunning. Little Lady Anne, whom Selwyn's friends in their correspondence refer to as 'your child,' was left motherless at the age of four, from which time Selwyn treated her with the greatest affection and care. Her spirit was 'much beyond her late mamma's,' as Gilly Williams writes to his friend, and he adds,

'There is seldom a night that she does not fight us all round. The very last night of all, she hit me a box on the ear, and told her good-natured step-mother not to be so impertinent as to trouble her head about her. The father talks to her out of Lord Halifax's "*Advice to his Daughters*," which, God knows, comes much too early in the day for her com-

prehension, so that I fear she will be undone before she knows she is to blame.'

This prophecy came true. Lady Anne was married early, and soon divorced, and then married again, but found little happiness in life.

Selwyn's second protégée was Maria Fagniani, known as Mie Mie. This latter was the daughter of an Italian nobleman, the Marchese Fagniani, and his wife, a handsome, artful woman, fond of intrigue and money; tastes which are often found together. George Selwyn considered himself the father of Mie Mie, and the same relationship was likewise claimed by the profligate Lord March, the pretensions of each being alternately, not only admitted, but encouraged by the frail and charming marchioness, who, looking to the future, beheld a profitable result from this joint paternity. Selwyn was, however, the most favoured of the claimants, and Mie Mie was entrusted to his bachelor care when little more than an infant, the marchioness and her spouse taking their way to the Continent. After a while, the child was claimed by her mother, simply because her husband's parents objected to their grandchild being left in Eng-

land; besides, the arrangement, madame considered, might throw doubts on the sanctity of her reputation in the eyes of a vicious and sadly censorious world.

Nothing could exceed Selwyn's grief at the prospect of being parted from this little charge, on whom he lavished more than a parent's love.

'I am aware,' wrote the marchioness, 'that the separation will cost you much; but prepare for it with courage, for there is no help for it.'

Selwyn hesitated to give up the child, and the mother wrote again.

'I have never doubted your good faith, and have given proof of this by leaving London without the child, contrary to the advice of everyone, and in opposition to the orders of my parents; indeed, your own countrymen assured me that you would never return me the child after I was gone.'

Later on, her language became stronger, and she characterised his conduct as 'devilish;' indeed she and the marchese were on the point of starting for England, to carry away Mie Mie before George consented to part with her. He confided her to the care of his confidential man-

servant, had a carriage specially built for her to travel in, and wrote out a list of the best hotels where he wished her to stay on her journey. His grief at her absence was vehement, and he received the genuine sympathy of his friends of both sexes on his loss.

‘I wish very much we were in town,’ writes Lord Carlisle, ‘because you think we could console you. Gregg writes me word that he has seen you, and makes me very unhappy by his account of you. He tells me you are dejected to the greatest degree, with several other circumstances that give me dreadful apprehensions of your health.’

Another friend, Forsyth, writes in much the same strain.

‘Let me beseech you, my good sir, to fortify your mind against the temporary loss of her, and endeavour to get up your spirits, which have been too long depressed.’

Other friends wrote him equally tender messages concerning his loss.

Mie Mie, after a time, was restored to his care, and soon blossomed into a young woman, when she was duly presented at Court; a ceremony

of which Storer writes to Lord Auckland, 'A great event has taken place in Selwyn's family. Mademoiselle Fagniani has been presented at Court. Of course Miss Fagniani—for she was presented as a subject of Great Britain—was very splendid; but George was most magnificent and *new* in every article of dress.'

Amongst George Selwyn's friends were two men whose names constantly occur in the literature of the day; these were Frederick, Viscount Bolingbroke, and Topham Beauclerk. The former was a lord of the bed-chamber, and a man of fashion and gallantry; the latter was one of the great-grandsons of Charles II., who early in life earned for himself the reputation of a man who loved wit and learning, folly and intrigue. His manners had something of the courtliness of his royal progenitor, whom his appearance resembled, and his conversation sparkled with humour and satire.

'Everything comes from him so easily,' said Dr. Johnson, 'it appears to me I labour when I say a good thing.' The great man had met Beauclerk at Oxford, where, according to Boswell, the doctor became fascinated with him,

and where 'the moral, pious Johnson and the gay, dissipated Beauclerk were companions.' This singular friendship, formed between a young man of fashion and a philosopher in a scratch wig, afforded them mutual pleasure, and Beauclerk became one of the earliest members of Johnson's famous literary club. No one could take more liberty than Beauclerk with the learned doctor, who contradicted Boswell, chided Goldsmith, and spoke sharp words to Garrick, but who was unusually lenient to his young friend.

Knowing this, Beauclerk, on one occasion when he had supped at a tavern with his friend Bennet Langton, and remained up till three o'clock in the morning, bethought him of calling on the doctor, and inviting him to join them in a ramble. Accordingly they went, and soundly hammered at the door of the philosopher's chambers at this unseemly hour, until at last the gaunt figure of the doctor appeared at the window in his shirt, with a little black wig on the top of his head, and a poker in his hand, prepared to do fierce battle, if necessary, with disturbing thieves. When he saw his friends,

he laid aside his weapon of defence, and listened calmly to their proposal. ‘What, is it you, you dogs? I’ll have a frisk with you,’ he said, almost as merry as they; and presently, when he had dressed, the three sallied forth in search of adventure, all so gaily oh, before the break of day; they turned them into Covent Garden, where the fruiterers and greengrocers were arranging their hampers just arrived from the country, when the learned, but burly doctor made some attempts to help them. But, the honest market-men eyeing him with grave suspicion, he and his friends soon thought it better to move on towards the brighter and better sphere of a neighbouring tavern, where Johnson made a bowl of bishop, a mixture of wines, oranges, and sugar, which he dearly loved, and over which he roared out some verses of Lord Lansdowne’s famous drinking-song; after this, they took a boat and rowed to Billingsgate. Indeed they were so pleased with their amusement that Johnson and Beauclerk were resolved to spend the rest of the day, Boswell says, in dissipation; but Langton, pleading an engagement to breakfast with some young ladies, determined to leave them,

at which conduct the doctor scolded him for deserting 'his social friends to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea'd* girls.'

But, though Johnson readily joined in such a harmless prank as this, he did not shut his eyes to his friend's faults. 'Thy body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue,' he once remarked to him, when Beauclerk, not seeming exactly to appreciate the compliment, the doctor said,

'Nay, sir, Alexander the Great, marching in triumph into Babylon, could not have desired to have had more said to him.'

In making this remark, it is probable that Johnson referred to Beauclerk's well-known intrigue with Lady Diana Bolingbroke. Her ladyship was the eldest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Marlborough, and was remarkable for her social brilliancy. She had married Viscount Bolingbroke in 1757, to whom she bore three children. After the birth of the last of these, she separated from her lord, vowing she would live with him no longer. Her friends declared he had behaved shamefully to her, and had used her very ill. On the other hand, my lord writes to George Selwyn, claiming his sympathy.

‘I intended to sup with you this evening,’ he says, ‘but I am so low, dejected, and miserable that I cannot speak, I can only cry. The just parting with her whom I know (though she does not yet) I shall not see again this long while, quite overcomes me. I shall therefore go and lie out of town this evening.’

No doubt the condolence he sought was freely given him by Selwyn, who, a couple of days after the receipt of this letter, received an epistle from the Hon. Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke’s brother, in which he says,

‘My brother, whom you inquire so kindly after, is not sunk into such low spirits as you seem to have heard. I think, on the contrary, though he laments the loss of a home, he does not whimper and whine after the object that has been, these two years past, the cause of his melancholy, and, I fancy, he at least sees that object in its true light. From a desponding lover and husband, as we have seen him, he is determined to become more a man of the world, and not to sacrifice his pleasure and interest in life to the indulgence of a grief, brought on by an accident originally, and afterwards continued

by the foolish obstinacy of a woman, and promoted by the unfeeling behaviour and indolence of her brother.'

Lady Diana took a house in Charles Street, where she was visited continually by Topham Beauclerk, who became her lover. This did not apparently prevent her amiable husband from being on terms of politeness with her. When she was ill, he wrote to present his compliments, and trusted 'Lady Diana Beauclerk's condition was improved,' on which occasion, she, not to be outdone in courtesy, wrote to inform 'Lord Bolingbroke that Lady Diana Bolingbroke was in better health.' With the same sense of politeness, and gracious desire for her welfare and his own, the viscount sought a divorce a little later on, which was granted him, when her ladyship married Topham Beauclerk.

Domestic unhappiness was, in this loose and profligate age, if not quite the order of the day, at least frequently to be met with in polite society. Infidelities to the marriage vow were looked on with the most liberal leniency by husbands and wives, and generally spoken of

with a charming frankness that scorned all secrecy. Indeed, an intrigue, full of pregnant details, was a morsel of news which the gossips of the club and drawing-room hailed as a boon, and dwelt on with an exceeding great relish ; and it was therefore with no ordinary delight that the affairs of the young Duke of Grafton's heart were discussed over cards and snuff, and the particulars of his amour whispered behind laced hats and wicked fans that screened no blushes.

This most famous scandal of the day connected the name of his Grace, Augustus Henry, third Duke of Grafton with Nancy Parsons, described by Horace Walpole as 'one of the commonest creatures in London, once much liked, but out of date.' The said Nancy, beloved by a duke, was the daughter of a Bond Street tailor, and had in early life given her too susceptible heart to a West Indian merchant, with whom she had gone to Jamaica ; but, growing tired of that country and of her lover, she escaped from both by stratagem, returned to London, and hired rooms at a perfumer's in Brewer Street, where she met his gallant Grace of

Grafton, who in a little while became so enamoured of her that he was willing to make any sacrifice for her sake. The duke was not only 'a profligate by profession,' as Junius described him, but he was likewise First Lord of the Treasury under a sovereign who prided himself on his remarkable virtue. All the time he could spare from his official duties was devoted to this lovely Nancy; he drove her in the full glare of publicity to Ascot races, sat beside and made love to her at the opera-house in presence of his wife and Their Sacred Majesties, and placed her at the head of his table to entertain his guests.

'He brings everybody to dine with him,' writes Lady Temple; 'his female friend sits at the upper end of his table; some do like it, and some do not. She is very pious, a constant church-woman, and reproves his Grace for swearing and being angry, which he owns is very wrong, and, with great submission, begs her pardon for being so ill-bred before her. Would he have done so to the Duchess of Grafton? But I am afraid she has lost him by her own fault, and is now very miserable.'

My Lady Temple, unfortunately for his Grace, was not the only one who made this amour the subject of a letter ; Junius, in one of those caustic epistles which have become a classic, publicly addressed him in bitter and trenchant language.

‘The example of the English nobility,’ says this famous writer, ‘may, for aught I know, sufficiently justify the Duke of Grafton when he indulges his genius in all the fashionable excesses of the age ; yet, considering his rank and station, I think it would do him more honour to be able to deny the fact than to defend it by such authority. But, if vice could be excused, there is a certain display of it, a certain outrage to decency and violation of public decorum, which, for the benefit of society, should never be forgiven. It is not that he kept a mistress at home, but that he constantly attended her abroad. It is not the private indulgence, but the public insult, of which I complain. The name of Miss Parsons would hardly have been known, if the First Lord of the Treasury had not led her in triumph through the opera-house even in the presence of the queen.’

The wife of his profligate Grace separated

from him, and a few years after, their marriage was dissolved by an Act of Parliament which received the royal assent. In the meanwhile, the duke—as may be supposed of a man of his various tastes—got tired of Nancy and left her. ‘His baseness to this woman,’ says Junius, speaking of his desertion, ‘is beyond description or belief.’ But, no matter what his character was, there were many fair ones willing to be led by him to the hymeneal altar; his choice fell on one of the daughters of the Rev. Richard Wrottesley, who was quite ready to swear love, honour, and obedience to him in return for the advantages of becoming a duchess. The ex-duchess comforted herself and the Earl of Upper Ossory by entering into the holy bonds with him.

Nancy Parsons’ romance, however, was not at an end; the late intrigue had rendered her fashionable, and she had now many ardent admirers in her train. Having a natural taste for high life, she was resolved not to receive a lover of lower rank than his whose delight it once was to honour her; her choice therefore fell on the Duke of Dorset, who, it was whispered, had thoughts of marrying her; but perhaps dukes

are more fickle than other peers—at all events, the fair Nancy, whose charms were by this time on the wane, was once more deserted by the man of her choice. However, her perseverance equalled her stock of unlimited affection, and, having persuaded Lord Maynard to marry her, she finally succeeded in her efforts to become a peeress of Great Britain. This event took place in 1777, when his lordship was addressed, in ‘A Letter to a Celebrated young Nobleman on His late Nuptials,’ by one of those anonymous pamphleteers who were the terror of their age. This epistle is marked by a charming freedom of speech and frankness of comment that must have delighted the world for whose benefit it was written; a paragraph or two will be sufficient to show its racy style.

‘You, my lord,’ the writer says, ‘in the opening of life, were always to be found at Newmarket. We pitied you, indeed, and marked you down as one of those unfortunate young men whose ambition it is to degrade themselves to a level with their grooms; when on a sudden you were flown to France, that brilliant seat of every levity, and outdoing *petits maîtres*

in insignificance. You will doubtless remember those amiable days when you were drawn gently along the Boulevards at Paris, reclining in the arms of an opera-dancer, who was supporting your pallid figure and comforting your affliction. The French all admired the affecting picture; they were in raptures at the sight of a young nobleman who showed such fondness for a woman somewhat advanced in life (indeed you wanted the prudence of age), and who could generously pass over the former conduct of a woman distinguished chiefly for her irregularities. After having exhibited the goodness of your disposition through every street in Paris, you were kind enough to return to your own country to improve us by your example, and, still more bountiful, to bring over this amiable woman as a model for your countrywomen. To so engaging a partner, my lord, we were not surprised that you dedicated your time. If you were inquired after at Court, you were engaged; if you were asked for in the fashionable clubs, you were amusing yourself in a domestic *tête-à-tête* at home; and, if important business wanted your attention, you were detained by your mistress.

‘From such a conduct we naturally imagined that Lord Maynard must at least be constant; when on a sudden we were alarmed with the indecent spectacle of her beating you in public for a supposed act of infidelity. You bore it like a brave man, for a woman is no antagonist. You patiently retired, and your lordship best knows the progress of reconciliation. It is probable you might consider it as a proof of love; and forgive the little effusion of passion in one whom, as a witty lord observed, must be allowed to be a *striking beauty*. The blow, however, we imagine, made some impression, for soon after you were separated. In uniting yourself to a woman of known bad character, you perpetuate your follies, and rob yourself of those advantages a prudent union naturally bestows . . . I will not on this occasion pay your lordship so bad a compliment as to enumerate Lady Maynard’s charms; all the world knows them as well as yourself; her virtues you alone are acquainted with. Make your amiable wife as happy as she deserves, and, if any Christian duty can possibly result from such an union, let it be deferred no longer. All the world

knows your wife has been—a great sinner; she cannot repent too soon. Continue, my lord, to act as you have done, and “the joy of heaven over her will be complete.”’

But perhaps the most amusing matrimonial squabble of the reign was that which disturbed the domestic happiness of Thomas Hervey and his wife. This honourable gentleman was a son of the first Earl of Bristol, and consequently brother to the celebrated John Hervey, whom the Princess Caroline, daughter of the late king, loved not wisely, but too well, for her own happiness. Tom Hervey, as he was usually called, was fully as eccentric as his remarkable brother, and was moreover not only ‘one of the genteel-est men that ever lived,’ according to Dr. Johnson, ‘but also one of the most profligate;’ his dissipation and wit rendered him a man of fashion, his conduct through life made him notorious. The first act of his which brought him prominently before the public was his elopement with the wife of Sir Thomas Hanmer; her ladyship, when subsequently departing from this sinful world, made a will in Tom Hervey’s favour of certain estates of which Sir Thomas had a life

possession. In the course of time, Sir Thomas cut down some of the timber on the property, whereon Tom Hervey wrote him a letter of an extraordinary kind, which he had printed and widely distributed; and so pleased was he with this production and its results, that he several times afterwards had recourse to the same means of airing his public grievances. In his letter to Sir Thomas, he dwells with satisfaction on his amour with her late ladyship, whom he speaks of as 'our wife,'—'For in heaven, whose wife shall she be?' he asks, philosophically. 'At length,' he freely tells the good Sir Thomas, 'she conceived that passion for me which she has so fervently and so pathetically avowed. It was not her eyes and ears enthralled her, for, if she could have been captivated by words or forms, she might have been in love with you.' He then requests Sir Thomas, if he sells any more timber, to give him the refusal of it.

His second letter concerning his affairs domestic in general, and the wife of his bosom in particular, which was published for the benefit of the public at large, was addressed to Dr. Johnson. The goodly philosopher came to

have his name mixed up in this disreputable affair in a very simple manner. The Herveys had been kind to Johnson in his early days of struggle, and he always remembered them with gratitude. 'If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him,' he said.

'Tom Hervey had a great liking for Johnson,' Topham Beauclerk told Boswell, 'and in his will had left him a legacy of £50. One day he said to me, "Johnson may want this money now more than afterwards, and I have a mind to give it to him directly; will you be so good as to carry a fifty-pound note from me to him?" This I positively refused to do, as he might perhaps have knocked me down for insulting him, and have afterwards put the note in his pocket. But I said, if Hervey would write him a letter, and enclose a fifty-pound note, I should take care to deliver it. He accordingly did write him a letter, mentioning that he was only paying a legacy a little sooner. To this letter he added, "P.S.—I am going to part with my wife."'

Johnson wrote back, advising him against this step, when Hervey at once seized the op-

portunity of vilifying his wife in a letter addressed to his old friend, and published for the benefit of the public at large.

‘I am persuaded that you are a very good man,’ he wrote to Johnson, ‘but you have thought fit to be an advocate for the most worthless woman that ever was on earth. Mrs. Hervey, as, to my eternal shame and sorrow, she is called, is a dishonour, not only to her sex, but to her kind.’

This is language devoid at least of all false delicacy, but what follows is more amusing.

‘She has been near sixteen years in my house without ever having been invited to it She has constantly run out my fortune, being herself at the same time so arrant a beggar that she was going upon the stage at Dublin to get a livelihood. The maintaining of her mother, who likewise had not a single guinea of her own, was soon imposed upon me, and, to say true, she has near as good a title to be my pensioner as the daughter. In about a year or two after my last complaint, the house I had taken at Richmond (in Lord Edgecombe’s opinion, who succeeded me in it, the most

agreeable in the town), was called a dog-hole, and my modest spouse importuned me for one of double the rent of the other; though I had objected, when I saw it, to the conditions, tenancy, and every other circumstances relative to it, you will be surprised, sir, when I tell you that the Prodigal, nevertheless, obtained it of me; yet what follows will surprise you more. Upon hearing she was sick there, and hoping to cheer her spirits by a visit, carrying with it in appearance some little remains of regard for her (though I most cordially hated her), I spent about ten days there, and, though this was the first and only time that I had ever obtruded my company upon her in either of her seats, something having ruffled her when I entered her chamber, in order to wish her a good night, she flew into a passion. Upon my asking her the cause of her disquiet, she replied, "How can it signify what it is? I am very ill. I had rather that you was not here; I want to be alone."

'I took my leave, you may be sure, and passed the night in a delirium, I suppose, as violent as ever was felt in Bedlam To

tell you the truth, I had turned her off a dozen years ago, but, fatally, my poor heart relented, and I took the vagrant into my house again; but, believe me, I had done myself less injury, if I had set fire to it, though it had been the best in London. I have no material charge to bring against her in point of conduct; she has, notwithstanding, behaved herself in such a manner as to disgust and irritate me.'

The picture Hervey presents of his domestic life is not complete without one scene, which he does not hesitate to give the public.

'In the last forcible entry she made into my chamber,' he says, 'she not only derided me and my sufferings (which, not long before, she had pretended to lament most pathetically in one of her penitent letters), but traduced my whole family. Upon which I spat in her face, and advised her to leave the room immediately, lest worst things happened to her; upon which she had prudence enough to withdraw.'

In the postscript to this epistle, he strikes the final blow at his own shame.

'I long to give you an account,' he writes, 'of the last riot committed in my house by

my termagent and her reprobate son, but am ashamed that the story should get abroad; and, upon my conscience, it would be matter of scandal to all womanhood.'

Some time after the appearance of these letters, which caused much amusement and gossip, the town was further diverted by two advertisements which appeared in the public papers from his pen, as follows:

'Whereas Mrs. Hervey has been three times from home last year, and at least as many the year before, without either my leave or privy; and likewise encouraged her son to persist in the same rebellious practices; I hereby declare that I neither am nor will be accountable for any future debts of hers whatsoever. She is now keeping forcible possession of my house, to which I never did invite, or even thought of inviting, her in all my life.

'THOMAS HERVEY.

'Bond Street.'

The second of these notices was still more remarkable and laughable:

· Having lately received another anonymous letter, containing an inuendo highly injurious to my reputation, I will so far befriend the contemptible author of it, as to advise him to remain for ever concealed, lest I should not allow him the accustomed means of defending himself against my just resentment. I declare, at the same time, to him and to all the world, upon the faith and honour of a gentleman, that I have not a single grief, either of mind, body, or fortune, though very sensibly suffering in all, but what I owe to the worthless subject of his remon-

strance. Nobody living stood more in need of a friend than her good ladyship' (Lady Hanmer), 'and none had ever found a nobler. Should I, therefore, receive any further molestations from her' (his wife) 'weak advocates, who have been her greatest enemies, I shall publish her last penitential letter, for it is since that, many of the capital and most unpardonable of her transgressions have been committed. I think, however, that the conscience which would not serve her as a monitor, will in time be my avenger.

'THOMAS HERVEY.'

But there were other members of society whose affections were more happily, if not, according to the opinions of their friends, more judiciously placed; one of these was a lady, whose name has been already mentioned in these pages, and whose elopement caused one of the greatest sensations of the day.

This victim to love's toils was Lady Susan Strangways, eldest daughter of the first Lord Ilchester and niece to Lord Holland, the lady who had once been the confidant of the king concerning his passion for Lady Sarah Lennox. Lady Susan's lover was William O'Brien, a handsome young actor, 'by nature formed to please,' as Churchill said of him, who fretted his hours upon the boards of Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres. Her ladyship and the actor, it appears,

were wise in their generation, and were enabled to keep their mutual love a secret from the curious and gossiping world which surrounded them, for the space of a year and a half; during which time they carried on an uninterrupted correspondence, by reason of O'Brien's imitating the handwriting of Lady Sarah Lennox; so clever indeed was his imitation, that the unsuspecting Lord Ilchester often delivered the love letters to his daughter. Their place of meeting was usually at Miss Read's, 'the paintress,' where Lady Susan went to take lessons, and also sit for her portrait, and where William O'Brien repaired likewise. One day, however, Miss Read, probably fearful lest she might get into trouble, betrayed the trust placed in her by the youthful lovers; when Lord Cathcart called to see her, she eagerly said to him, 'My lord, there is a couple in the next room that, I am sure, ought not to be together; I wish,' added the discreet lady, 'your lordship would look in.' Lord Cathcart opened the door of the apartment in which Lady Susan was holding conversation with her lover, shut it again directly, and then proceeded to enlighten her father concerning her ladyship's amour.

Lord Ilchester was wrathful indeed, but clever Lady Susan was equal to the occasion; she flung herself on her knees at his feet, confessed her love, and vowed to break it off; but, as a last favour, besought permission to see her lover just once more, that she might bid him farewell for ever. Lord Ilchester, satisfied by her protestations, consented to the final interview, which took place early in the week. On the following Friday she came of age, and on Saturday morning she walked down stairs, and calling her footman, announced that she was going to breakfast with her friend Lady Sarah, but would call on her way at Miss Read's; when she was some distance from the house, she suddenly remembered a particular cap in which she wished to be painted, sent back the footman for it, and no sooner had he left her, than she whipped into a hackney-coach, and was carried to Covent Garden church, where her lover already waited her, and where she was safely married.

‘Poor Lord Ilchester is almost distracted,’ writes Horace Walpole, and then the aristocratic cynic adds, with a sneer, ‘Indeed, it is

the completion of disgrace—even a footman were preferable.’

All the world wondered indeed how my lady could have married a poor player.

‘She may, however,’ says the authority just quoted, ‘still keep good company, and say, *Nos numeri sumus*—Lady Mary Duncan, Lady Caroline Adair, Lady Betty Gallini—the shopkeepers of the next age will be mighty well born.’

It may be added that two of these ladies mentioned married respectively a surgeon and a medical doctor, the third wedded Sir John Gallini. Lady Susan’s friends were indeed in sore distress at this act of hers; her husband being a Roman Catholic, it was of course impossible for him to get appointed to any office under government.

Sir Francis Delaval being, as Walpole says, ‘touched by her calamity, has made her a present—of what do you think?—of a rich gold stuff! The delightful charity! O’Brien comforts himself, and says it will make a shining passage in his little history.’

It was soon determined to send the actor and his wife out of the country, and this plan was

speedily effected. They were married late in April, and in October Lord Holland wrote to George Grenville, then prime minister, of his endeavour 'to assuage the incurable wound given to my brother by his daughter. Mr. O'Brien,' he continues, 'is gone with her to New York, and the keeping him there in credit is all that can be done, whilst we, if possible, forget them here. I hear there is a complaint against Mr. Lambert Moore, who may probably, in consequence of it, be removed; in that case, I beg you to make Mr. O'Brien Comptroller of the Customs at New York in his room. I will be security that the public shall not suffer. His Majesty has shown so much compassion on this unhappy occasion that I flatter myself he will have no objection.'

This appointment was probably not given to O'Brien, who soon returned to town, though not to the stage, for which, however, he wrote a couple of comedies and a farce, which were more or less successful. Shortly after his arrival, he was appointed Receiver General of the County of Dorset, and both he and Lady Susan, who never repented her marriage, lived to a good old age.

A few months after Lady Susan's elopement, another marriage took place yet more remarkable; the bridegroom was, according to Walpole's opinion, much more preferable than an actor, being a footman, one John Sturgeon, and the bride, the Marquis of Rockingham's youngest sister, Lady Henrietta Alice Wentworth. This alliance of her ladyship with a valet caused a commotion in all circles; bets were made in the clubs as to its truth, gossips waved their fans over the whispered details, and the lovers of scandal received it as a savoury morsel of which their palates did not easily tire. 'The girls,' writes Gilly Williams, 'talk of nothing but the match between Lord Rockingham's sister and her footman, John Sturgeon.'

About this marriage, however, there was no concealment or undue haste; indeed, according to some of the correspondents of the day, not sufficient haste. The lady was in her twenty-seventh year, and had a fortune completely at her own disposal, the arrangement of which, on such an occasion, proclaimed her a woman of no ordinary prudence. She settled the sum of one hundred a year for life upon her husband,

entailed her whole fortune on such children as Providence might send her, failing which it went back to her own family. Indeed she betrayed a wisdom too rarely met with before marriage in making provisions for any disturbances that might threaten her future state, by securing to her spouse his annuity, even in case they separated. All this, drawn up in her own hand, she sent to Lord Mansfield, whom she appointed as her trustee, who gave it as his learned opinion that ‘she had not left one cranny of the law unstopped, and that the settlements were as binding as any lawyer could make them.’

‘Considering how plain she is,’ says Horace Walpole, ‘she has not, I think, sweetened the draught too much for her lover.’

After the ceremony, she retired with the footman to his family in Ireland as plain Mrs. Henrietta Sturgeon.

CHAPTER IX.

Amusements of the Town—Some Masquerades—Strange Costumes—Mr. Cornelly's Entertainments—Suppers and Breakfasts—Madame de Boufflers at Strawberry Hill—Her Visit to Dr. Johnson—Favourite Opera-singers—Lord March and the Rena—The Archbishop of Canterbury Scandalizes Lady Huntington—Rage for Gambling and its Consequences—The Bucks and the Maccaronies—Samuel Foot, 'the Celebrated Buffoon'—Fashionable Rogues—Some Strange Notices.

THOUGH the Court remained virtuously dull, the royal example, excellent in itself, was by no means followed by the town; where assemblies raged, masquerades obtained, and gambling was the order of the day. The fashionable world spent its days and nights by attending routs, balls, and operas; by gambling, intriguing, sinning, and dressing; satisfied with itself, if all these things were accomplished with good taste. Amongst the most brilliant members of this gay and pleasure loving society,

were the young Duke and Duchess of Richmond, whose entertainments were usually magnificent, and always popular. One of these, a masquerade, given in the earlier part of this reign, in honour of the king's birthday, was especially noted for its splendour.

It was held in the wide gardens attached to Richmond House, which sloped down to the Thames, and were lit with coloured lamps; here, on a sultry June night, princes, peers, and courtiers, maidens fair, and stately dames, to the number of six hundred, arrayed in every imaginable costume, held revelry till early dawn. Here came the beautiful Duchess of Hamilton and Argyle, stately and graceful, arrayed as Night, in trailing robes, strewn with innumerable stars; and here also was her father, in the habit of a running footman, with the portrait of his other daughter, poor Lady Coventry, hung at his button-hole, like a Croix de St. Louis; then there was Lucy Southwell, 'that curtseys like a bear,' attended by that brilliant rake, Lord March, who was perpetually in love with the ladies of the opera, and George Townshend, who passed his time very agreeably to

himself and his friends by mimicing the Duke of Cumberland. Augustus Hervey, another member of a family famous for its eccentricity, was present, and, being perfectly disguised, treated everybody whom he recognized to a piece of his mind concerning their respective private histories, not forgetting to level the choicest shafts of his sarcasms at the fair Miss Chudleigh, to whom he was then privately married.

Her Grace of Richmond, the hostess, shone in all the glory of her dazzling beauty, which was enhanced by the costume of a Persian sultana; whilst the Duchess of Grafton, scarcely less handsome, was arrayed as Cleopatra. His Grace of Cumberland was present, keeping close to charming Mrs. Fitzroy, who, clad in a Turkish costume, looked sufficiently bewitching to cause the Margrave of Anspach to wish himself a Turk. Lady Pembroke looked divinely fair in the robes of a pilgrim, and Lady George Lennox and Lady Bolingbroke went as Grecian girls. Then there were knights of every clime and century, not wanting in gallantry, and emperors whose sole ambition was to reign

over hearts, and Punches who were at liberty to scream out secrets at the pitch of their wicked voices, and devils who led those who hearkened to them into temptation, and bards who were songless.

The lower apartments of Richmond House were brilliantly lit, and spread with many supper tables; and presently there were fireworks let off from an encampment of barges stationed in the middle of the Thames, and decked with streamers, and by their light a vast crowd of heads was discovered at the windows and on the roofs of the neighbouring houses, looking at the gay scene.

Another great masquerade was given at 'Almack's Assembly Rooms,' where the balls were presided over by a committee of ladies of quality; and where was established a club 'for lords and ladies,' which had at first met at a tavern, but subsequently, to satisfy the scruples of Lady Pembroke, one of the foundresses, in a room at 'Almack's.' In this club the ladies nominated and elected gentlemen, and *vice versa*; so that no lady could exclude a lady, or no gentleman black-ball a gentleman, no

matter how much he or she desired it. Here, as Gilly Williams says, ‘Almack’s Scotch face, in a bag wig, waiting at supper would divert you, as would his lady in a sack, making tea, and curtsying to the duchesses.’ The only admission to these balls was by vouchers of personal introduction. The great room set aside for dancing was handsomely decorated with gilt columnus and pilasters, classic medallions, vast mirrors, and cut-glass lustres. The masquerade held here in 1773, was remarkable for its excellent music, its fine entertainment, and the number of elegant figures that attended it. Amongst others who composed this gay and motley throng, were my Lady Archer, dressed as a blue-coat boy, and my Lord Edgecombe as an old washerwoman, in a linen bed-gown. There were also two charming Eves, accompanied by two handsome Adams, such dull fellows in good truth, that a wag went whispering all round the room he did not wonder his first mother was tempted by a serpent, if the companion of her blissful bowers was such a heavy fellow as these Adams. Four officers, dressed in the uniform of the Swiss Guards, made a fine

show, finely dressed in blue with red neck-clothes that made them look, 'twas said, like Norfolk turkeys with their throats cut ; a chattering mungo who teased many, asked George Selwyn, who was present as a sage, what was his fate. 'Tyburn,' said the wit, briefly ; he had also something to say to Samuel Foote, who was in a handsome cavalier costume. 'Ah, Mr. Foote, if your comedies were as well-made as your clothes, what a genius you would be !'

Sir Watkin Williams Wynne was present as St. David, mounted on a sturdy goat that, frightened by the glare and noise, ran here and there, to the terror of many and the great amusement of his saintship. Mrs. Beecher, a Polish lady with an excellent fine figure, and £20,000 worth of diamonds, was the centre of attraction ; there were also present a vast number of poets and pedlars, haymakers, devils, and cooks, harlequins, gipsies, shepherdesses, sweeps, and many nymphs, who all diverted themselves much to their satisfaction.

Lord Minto speaks of another masquerade at Hammersmith, given by Mrs. Sturt, to which he went with Lady Palmerston and Mrs. Crew,

Windham, and Tom Pelham, from which they did not return till six in the morning. There were a vast number there, amongst others Jack Payne, who dressed as a young lady, and looked and acted so remarkably well that this assumed character, it was said, suited him infinitely better than his own. The gallant captain was chaperoned by Mrs. Fitzherbert. The three princes were there likewise, all in Highland dresses, and looking very well.

‘Their knees were bare,’ Mrs. Crew told Lord Minto, ‘and I saw the Prince of Wales make a lady feel his bare knee. She had asked him something about that part of the dress, and he said it was exactly right, and she should see it was. “There,” said he, “you may squeeze it if you like,” which she did accordingly. They had breeches, however, and only rolled up the breeches’ knees,’ added Mrs. Crew.

Decency, indeed, was not always preserved on such occasions, and we read of several strange ‘figures’ which attended the public masquerades given at Carlisle House in Soho Square by the famous Mrs. Cornely. This remarkable and enterprising lady, said to be Irish

by birth, had once upon a time been a public singer, but, having taken Carlisle House, set about ministering to public pleasure in another form. Here she established assemblies and subscription balls, and presided over the diversions of the nobility; at first she had somewhat scandalized, but, the fame of her entertainments getting abroad, her gorgeous balls were soon crowded with the righteous, who were not quite satisfied to leave all the amusement to the wicked. She had altered, rebuilt, and decorated Carlisle House at a vast cost, until it assumed the appearance, according to a writer of the period, of 'a fairy palace.' Even the underground apartments were magnificent; they consisted of seven rooms, 'which, from the vast variety and ornaments, the grandeur and magnificence of some, the elegant simplicity of others, together with the amazing beauty of the lights, one of the principal excellencies of the whole, form a view, on descending a perpendicular flight of stairs, most sumptuously and strikingly pleasing.'

Nothing could be more magnificent than the brilliancy of her masquerade balls, which usu-

ally commenced at nine and ended at six o'clock the following morning, and which were attended by the rank, wealth, and beauty of the town. Here came her patrons and patronesses arrayed in every imaginable costume which taste or eccentricity could suggest, all of which were more or less costly, and which went to make up a scene of unequalled brilliancy. To one of these remarkable masquerades, which set the whole town a talking for days, 'two great personages,' the king and queen, were, according to the *London Chronicle*, 'complimented with two tickets, which they very politely returned;' but the refusal of their Majesties did not prevent the numerous attendance of their faithful subjects, and of some members of their royal family. Here was the Duke of Cumberland as Henry VIII., the Duke of Gloucester 'in an old English habit with a star on the cloak,' the Countess Waldegrave as Jane Shore, Lady Pomfret as a Greek sultana, Lady Stanhope as Melpomene, the Duchess of Bolton as the chaste Diana, Lady Edgcombe as a nun, the Duchess of Buccleugh as the Witch of Endor, all in most costly garb. But their richness of apparel was surpassed by

Miss Monckton, Lord Gallway's daughter, who appeared in the character of an Indian sultana, 'in a robe of cloth of gold and a rich veil, the seams of her habit being embroidered with precious stones, and a magnificent cluster of stones on her head;' the jewels she wore were valued at £30,000.

In the midst of the blaze of magnificence which the scene presented, a figure entered which immediately attracted every eye, this being none other than Captain Watson of the Guards in the character of Adam, who had his dress fitted so close and painted so naturally that, on his first approach, the eager and curious crowd who surrounded him believed he was wholly unadorned.

Another figure was that of a Savoyard carrying a hurdy-gurdy and leading a bear; they had been stopped on their entrance, as the bear had only a half or lady's ticket, but were admitted on the Savoyard assuring the doorkeeper that it was a female bear. But, if the aristocratic throng inside had their amusement, so also had the ignoble throng which gathered in vast numbers in the streets leading to Mrs.

Cornely's fairy palace, and who, holding torches aloft, made the occupants of the various chairs and coaches let down the windows that they might be afforded a sight of their dresses; some of them went further still, and insisted in a good humoured way on the masks shaking hands with as many of them as could reach their conveyances, a complacency which one lady had cause to regret, for no sooner had she placed her delicate palm in the hand of a friendly and dexterous thief than he slipped three valuable rings from her fingers into his safer keeping.

The presiding genius over this and kindred entertainments, the charming Mrs. Cornely, it is sad to narrate, was afterwards obliged to sell asses' milk at Kensington, disguising her individuality under the common but familiar name of Smith, and she finally ended her days in the Fleet prison.

Suppers were also much in vogue, and were usually held when the guests had returned from the opera or play-house; wit and wine flowed freely at these convivial repasts, repartee was exchanged, and scandal talked till the small

hours. Walpole tells us he went to a supper one night at my Lord Edgecombe's in Upper Grosvenor Street, after witnessing 'a very wretched comedy, Dr. Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer."' When he was yet at supper, 'that maccaroni rake, Lady Powis, who is just come to her estate and spending it,' called in with news of a fire in the Strand. It was then past one in the morning, but my Lady Hertford, Lady Powis, Mrs. Honte, and Horace must set off at once, and were within an inch of seeing the Adelphi Buildings burned to the ground.

Sir Francis Delaval, who was a gay soul, used to light up Lord Lexborough's house, and give suppers to gay assemblies of wits, maccaronies, and opera-girls.

Breakfasts were by no means so fashionable as suppers; after the fatigues of nights spent in rounds of pleasure, men and women of fashion were too exhausted to exert their powers to please in the forenoon, or to give utterance to those flashes of wit and humour then invariably expected at all social gatherings, but which best harmonized with candle-light. Such entertainments were, however, occasionally given;

the Duchess of Gloucester once entertained four hundred guests at breakfast at her house at Blackheath; and a record is left us of a yet more famous breakfast, at which Horace Walpole entertained La Comtesse de Boufflers, '*sçavante galante*,' who was mistress of the Prince de Conti. When this lady arrived in town, she was, by reason of her interesting reputation and beauty, immediately lionized, and hurried about from one sight to another from morning till night, until she, 'who, never having stirred ten miles from Paris, and having only rolled in an easy coach from one hotel to another on a gliding pavement,' was quite worn out. Walpole thought she was spoiled by her unrelaxed attention to applause. 'You would think,' he says, 'she was always sitting for her picture to her biographer.'

To the great breakfast which he made for her at Strawberry Hill, he invited some distinguished friends, amongst whom were the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, Lord Hertford, Lady Mary Coke, Duclos, the author of '*The History of Louis XI.*' and several novels, Lord and Lady Holderness, and the famous Chevalier d'Eon,

then secretary to the French ambassador, who, in the latter years of his life, was compelled to dress as a female.

Madame de Boufflers went thither ‘with her eyes a foot deep in her head, her hands dangling, and scarcely able to support her knitting-bag.’ The feast was spread in the big parlour, and the host had filled the great hall and cloisters by turns with French horns and clarionettes. Presently Horace conducted them to see his printing-press, where what should they find but half a dozen lines celebrating the inimitable graces of madame, already in type, and just waiting to be turned out, a gentillesse which pleased; then he carried them to another apartment which he called the cabinet, where the yellow glass at the top, having a charming sun for a foil, surmounted the indifference of all, and delighted her Grace of Grafton, who entered into the air of enchantment and fairyism of the place.

Madame la Comtesse, before she left town, paid a morning visit to another distinguished man, who did not, however, receive her with such state. Madame, who was the friend of

Rousseau, was anxious to make the acquaintance of the English philosopher Dr. Johnson, and, having expressed her desires to Topham Beauclerk, that worthy man undertook the task of introducing her to his learned friend. Accordingly, they went to his chambers in the Temple, where madame was for some time entertained by his conversation; when her interview was over, she and her friend left, and had got so far as the Inner Temple Lane, when all at once they heard a voice like thunder, and looking round, saw Johnson, who, suddenly taking it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, hurried after them in violent agitation, and, brushing in between Beauclerk and the countess, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. The philosopher's dress on the occasion was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig on the top of his head, whilst the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hung loose.

Private concerts were another form of entertainment which at this period, when there

was a general rage for music, were extremely fashionable; and the names of Riccarelli, Guadagni, Manzoli, Tondino, Zamparini, and Pacchiocrotti, whom pretty Mrs. Sheridan could not hear without tears, became household words. Almost every lady of quality had her weekly musical parties, where Italian singers and French fiddlers came dressed in velvet, lace, and embroidery, so as sometimes to be taken for foreign ambassadors. Dr. Burney avowed that Manzoli's voice was 'the most powerful and voluminous soprano,' and Gilly Williams writes to tell Selwyn, 'the knowing ones agree nothing like Manzoli has been imported into this country for ages.' This singer became such a public favourite that, at his benefit, his receipts were a thousand guineas, free of all charges.

'This,' says one of the newspapers of the day, 'added to the sum of fifteen hundred pounds, which he has already saved, and the remaining profits of the season, is surely an undoubted proof of British generosity. One particular lady complimented the singer with a two hundred pound bill for a single ticket on that occasion.'

Walpole says of him, he 'is come a little late,

or I think he would have had as many diamond watches and snuff-boxes as Farinelli had.'

Guadagni, another singer of renown, was the cause of one of those pretty quarrels, concerning which party-spirit ran high, and which mightily diverted the town. The Hon. Mr. Hobart, Lord Buckingham's brother, who was manager of the operas at the Haymarket, grievously offended Guadagni by preferring the Zamperin, his mistress, to the singer's sister. Guadagni was a man of vast importance, who was accustomed to command, and who had held such sway in Vienna that, to pique a man of quality, he had named a minister to fair Venice; he therefore could not brook any disregard to his desire, and left the Haymarket, when several of his great lady friends, amongst whom were the Duchess of Northumberland and Lady Harrington, espousing his cause, he opened an opera at Mrs. Cornely's. There Guadagni established his operas, which were wonderfully well attended by the fashionable portion of the town.

To avoid the licensing act, Mrs. Cornely announced the entertainments under the names of Harmonic Meetings, and took no money, but

received subscriptions to provide coals for the poor, just as she had fitly described her masquerades as being for the benefit of commerce. The Haymarket opera house began to thin; Mr. Hobart's coffers grew empty, and, in his rage, he informed the Bench of Justices regarding Mrs. Cornely's operas, when they were quashed, to the grief of the Guadagni's fair friends, one of whom, Lady Bingley, gave an annuity of £300 to this charming signor.

Another Italian singer, was the Rena, for whom Lord March had a tender regard. When Horace Walpole entertained the earl at Strawberry Hill, my lord brought my lady in his train, to which Walpole, with the freedom of his age, had not the slightest objection, but feared 'it would not raise his reputation in the neighbourhood.' The same liberality was, on another occasion, extended to the earl and his operatic friend by the Baron d'Holbach, a man of parts and fortune, who was invited by George Selwyn to meet Lord March; it was intimated to him that the charming Rena would be present, but the gracious baron declared he would consider himself honoured by the society

of mademoiselle, for ‘nothing prudish entered into his character.’

My lord, however, was seldom constant to one amour for long, and in due time the Rena gave place in his capacious heart to another singer, likewise an Italian, ‘the little Tondino,’ who reigned mistress of his affections for some time. When taking her departure for France, Lord March wrote to Selwyn, who was then in Paris, concerning her, and his lines betray a deeper feeling than might have been expected from a man of his reputation.

‘I am just preparing to conduct the poor little Tondino to Dover,’ he says, ‘and, as I shall hardly be able to write to you there, I shall endeavour to say two or three words to you while she is getting ready. I am sure you will be good to her, for I know you love me, and I can desire nothing of you that I shall feel so sensibly as your notice of her . . . My heart is so full that I can neither think, speak, nor write. How I shall be able to part with her, or come back to the house, I do not know. The sound of her voice fills my eyes with fresh tears. My dear George, *j’ai le cœur si serré que*

je ne suis bon à present qu' a pleurer. Farewell, I hear her coming, and this is perhaps the last time I shall see her here.'

In her absence, however, the fickle lord's heart was consumed by Zamparini, who was not only a singer of the first celebrity, but a dancer of such merit that the graceful movements of her light fantastic toe made sad havoc on the too susceptible hearts of those beaux who witnessed her performance, and completely captivated my Lord March. The Zamparini belonged 'to a rascally garlic tribe, whose very existence depends on her beauty,' from whose society my lord had much difficulty in separating her.

'He looks miserable,' says Gilly Williams, 'and yet he takes the Zamparini off in her opera-dress every night in his chariot.'

Presently news came of the Rena's return to town from Paris, and he writes to tell Selwyn his violent fancy for the Zamparini has a little abated, and hopes it may be quite so before the Rena's return, 'else I fear it will interrupt our society.' He furthermore avows his friendship and affection for her, and, as one whom

he loves very much, he hopes she 'will have some indulgence for my follies,' a contrary behaviour, he adds, 'would be quite ridiculous and affected.'

These various ladies, the history of whose amours was public property, which lent them additional interest, were received with great courtesy by the noble dames at whose mansions they warbled operatic arias, for the benefit of ears polite, whilst the gossips of the day recounted in whispers what heroes of the horse and foot guards wore chicken-skin gloves, how much false hair her Grace of Manchester had recently bought, and the name of the famous face wash which was used by the Maccaroni beaux.

The town indeed was extremely lively.

'Every drawing-room,' says the *Westminster Gazette* of 1773, 'is as different in its manners and modes as it is in its company. One is celebrated for cards, another for wit, a third for beauties, a fourth for coxcombs, a fifth for old maids and scandal, a sixth for fashion, and a seventh for cotillions.'

Not only did routs, balls, and gambling ob-

tain in the drawing-rooms of wicked worldlings, but such like sinful amusements found their way into the episcopal palace of Dr. Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Lady Huntingdon's vast horror. Her ladyship was a mighty pious woman, who was styled the 'Queen of the Methodists.' Whitfield had preached in her drawing-rooms to fashionable but heedless sinners, and had spoken of her as 'the lady elect;' but the prophet had come to shame, according to Walpole, who tells that the holy man one day asked my Lady Huntingdon for forty pounds for some distressed saint or other. Perhaps she considered that distress was the most proper condition for saints; at all events, she declared she had not so much money in the house, but was finally induced to give her watch and chain, which the preacher said were vanities, not worthless vanities, however.

'About a fortnight afterwards,' says Horace, 'going to his house, and being carried into his wife's chamber, among the paraphernalia of the latter, the countess found her own offering. This has made a terrible schism.'

But her ladyship was sufficiently a saint in

her own right to regard diversions as Satan's harvest for lost souls, and hearing that routs were given at the episcopal palace, she sought an interview with their Majesties, in order to complain of Dr. Cornwallis.

'I have been told too many odd things of your ladyship,' said the king, staring at her with his round blue eyes, 'that I am free to confess I felt a great degree of curiosity to see if you were at all like other women.'

After this courteous remark, Lady Huntingdon stated the object of her visit, when the queen asked her many questions, and insisted that her ladyship should take some refreshments before she departed, a most unusual piece of hospitality on the part of her economical Majesty, who had refused her maids of honour the nightly suppers which it had always been the habit of those who formerly held that post to enjoy. After refreshments had been partaken of, their Majesties grew so agreeable as to permit her ladyship to kiss their royal hands, a piece of vast condescension for which she returned her most grateful thanks.

Soon after the interview, the king wrote in-

dignantly to the good prelate, telling him of 'the grief and concern with which his breast was afflicted' at the news that routs had made their sinful way into his palace; declaring he held 'those levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many centuries devoted to divine studies, religious retirement, and the exclusive exercise of charity and benevolence.' He concluded by trusting he would have no occasion to show further marks of his displeasure, and signed himself his lordship's 'gracious friend.'

But the principal vice of the age may be considered to have been gambling, which was limited neither to age nor sex.

'As the gambling and extravagance of the young men of quality has arrived now at a pitch never heard of, it is worth while to give some account of it,' writes Horace Walpole in his last journals (1772). 'They had a club at one Almack's in Pall Mall, where they played only for rouleaus of £50 each rouleau; and generally there was £10,000 in specie on the table. Lord Holland had paid above £20,000 for his two sons. Nor were the manners of the

gamesters, or even their dresses for play, underserving notice. They began by pulling off their embroidered clothes, and put on frieze great-coats, or turned their coats inside outwards for luck. They put on pieces of leather (such as is worn by footmen when they clean knives) to save their lace ruffles; and to guard their eyes from the light, and to prevent tumbling their hair, wore high-crowned straw hats with broad brims, and adorned with flowers and ribbons; masks to conceal their emotions when they played at quinze. Each gamester had a small neat stand by him, with a large rim to hold their tea, or a wooden bowl with an edge of ormolu, to hold their rouleaus. They borrowed great sums of the Jews at exorbitant premiums. Charles Fox called his outward room, where those Jews waited till he rose, the Jerusalem Chamber. His brother Stephen was enormously fat; George Selwyn said he was in the right to deal with Shylocks, as he could give them pounds of flesh.'

Gibbon the historian said Almack's 'was the only place which still invites the flower of English youth.' It was a common occurrence

for young men of fashion to lose ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand pounds in one night. Lord Stravondale, whilst yet a minor, lost at this club on one evening eleven thousand pounds, but recovered it by one great hand at hazard; whereon his lordship swore a great oath. 'Now, if I had been playing deep,' quoth he, 'I might have won millions.'

Certainly gambling was Charles Fox's ruling passion; night after night he was to be found at the faro table of one of his clubs, where he lost enormous sums and ran himself hopelessly into debt, when he was often reduced to borrow a guinea from one of the club waiters, and was dunned by the chairmen whom he employed. In the early part of one night he won eight thousand pounds, but, alas, this was but a trifling sum, the greater part of which he paid away before standing up from the table, the remainder he staked again and lost. His father, Lord Holland, at his death left him £154,000 to pay his debts, but this amount did not cover his liabilities, and in a few years the gambler was obliged to sell all he possessed, including his library, for the benefit of his creditors.

‘Charles tells me,’ writes Lord Carlisle to George Selwyn, ‘he has not now, nor has had for some time, one guinea, and is happier on that account.’

During the races at Newmarket, gambling was carried on to a vast extent, by way of counter excitement to the events of the day. In 1772, a correspondent of Lord Harcourt’s writes to him :

‘Play ran higher, if possible, at Newmarket this meeting than at any of the former; even rouleaus were despised, and nothing but bank notes seen on the table. They say a £10,000 was carried from London; even Lord Carmarthen, after all his sage resolutions not to game, was there drawn in to lose £1,200—a mere trifle in these days, but more than either he or the Duke of Leeds can afford to pay.’

The ‘Cocoa-tree Club’ was another resort of fashionable gamblers; here, after the play was over, and both Houses had risen, peers, politicians, counsellors, and men of fashion might be seen ‘supping at little tables covered with a napkin, in the middle of a coffee-room, upon a bit of cold meat and a sandwich, and drink-

ing a glass of punch,' after which they adjourned to the gambling-rooms, to play until next morning.

This diversion, which was the cause of so much anxiety, excitement, and ruin, was shared by women. Cards had obtained during the last two reigns, but faro tables were now introduced into drawing-rooms, and guineas changed ownership with great rapidity.

'The women,' writes Lord Nuneham, 'play more than the men at "White's" did twelve years ago, and Miss Pelham on Sunday lost £400 at a sitting.'

Perhaps the first to set up a gambling table in her saloons was Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cumberland, who, with her sister, presided over it with great profit, if not edification, to themselves. The latter, Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, had the reputation of being dexterous, a fame of which she subsequently showed herself not unworthy. To better her fortune, Lady Elizabeth went to Germany, where her proverbial good luck at games of hazard followed her, until she was discovered cheating, when, as a punishment, she was made to draw a

barrow, to which she was chained, through the streets; after this severe chastisement, she retired to another principality, where she was discovered at her old tricks, for which offence she was clapped into prison, where this sister-in-law of a royal duke ended her life by poison. Lady Essex was another woman of high degree who had a passion for gambling, and who kept the town alive by the splendour of her card-parties.

Play went high on some occasions amongst ladies of fashion, whose discretion was more limited than their fortunes. The *Court Miscellany* of 1765 makes a statement that 'the lady of a Right Hon. personage last night attempted to shoot herself, on account of some losses at play, which she did not choose should come to the ears of her husband. Happily, however, the pistol missed fire, but the snap alarming her woman, who was in the ante-chamber, she instantly came in, and prevented any second endeavour of executing the terrible purpose of her mistress.' Another magazine in the following year states that 'a lady at the west end of the town, lost, one night last week,

at a sitting, three thousand guineas at loo.' Whilst the *London Chronicle* for August 13, 1775, states that on 'Wednesday evening, two ladies of distinction, having a dispute at a party of cards, repaired yesterday morning in their carriages to a field near Pancras, and fought a duel with pistols, when, one of them being shot in the left arm, the affair terminated.'

'A lady who ruins her family,' says Mr. Sergeant Circut in the 'Lame Lover,' a play satirising the follies of the age, 'by punctually paying her losses at play, and a gentleman who kills his best friend in a ridiculous quarrel, are your only tip-top people of honour.'

The beaux during this reign, and in the last, were divided into two classes; one of which was composed of robust scamps, and the other of effeminate noodles, called maccaronies. Speaking of the former, the *Court Miscellany* ventilates its opinions in language not to be mistaken.

'There is a part of taste,' says this article, 'that seems at present extremely prevailing in these kingdoms, which deserves particular attention, that of imitating the dress of grooms, the walk or roul of common sharpers and pick-

pockets, the oaths of fishwomen, chair-men, draymen, and porters; with all the additional flowers of rhetoric and figures of speech extracted from Newgate itself. Where this refinement will end, it is not easy to guess, since it is already practised by almost all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, under the notable sanction of that senseless and despicable class of people called "bucks."

Attending cock and dog-fights in the morning, drinking at taverns and gambling at clubs in the evening, provoking a fight or beating a watchman at night, was the usual manner in which they passed their days; a mode seemingly much to their satisfaction. The Prince of Wales, who loved prize-fighting, attended one of these exhibitions with a group of his friends, when, so rare was the sport exhibited on this occasion patronised by royalty, that one of the combatants was crushed out of all semblance to humanity, and beaten to death. One of his friends, my Lord Lichfield, was more humane, as may be judged from the fact that he dismissed his French cook for flogging a pig three weeks old to death, in order that it might eat

tender; monsieur the executioner thought himself ill-repaid for a labour which had taken him three hours, but my lord turned him out of the house with a legacy of oaths, and public feeling was so much against the cook that he had to repair to his native land.

Lord Lichfield occasionally imbibed more than was good for him, and one night, when Lord Halifax was rehearsing a political speech to a few select friends at his own house, my Lord Lichfield came in extremely drunk, and proposed amendments and alterations, to the no small amusement of the company. He was seconded in all he said by Lord Pomfret, 'whose head,' says Gilly Williams, who tells the story, 'is naturally as hot as the other's accidentally; so between them both the evening ended much more sprightly than those evenings usually do.'

Three other beaux of this class were Captains Scaurn and Crofts of the Light Dragoons, and Mr. Lyttelton, who ogled Mrs. Hartley, a mighty fine actress and a pleasant woman, when she was diverting herself at Ranelagh. This lady was sitting beside the Rev. Mr. Bates, who, like her, had come to take the air, and who was

vastly affronted by the conduct of these fine gentlemen, who, in return for his frowns, made faces, not at him, but at each other. The reverend man volunteered the remark that they were ‘dirty, impertinent puppies,’ in reply to which information one of the gallant sons of Mars informed the parson he was ‘indeed a tight good fellow,’ and wished to know if he threatened him, because he was a boxer. With most unclerical spirit, Mr. Bates declared, if he said three more words, he ‘would ring his nose off his face;’ when the captain, wishing to preserve his nose and his honour, asked for the parson’s address; and at two o’clock the next morning the reverend man was waked by a message from Captain Crofts to say, if he would not appoint an hour and place for a fight, the gallant captain aforementioned would ‘pull Mr. Bates’ nose, spit in his face, and drag the black coat off his back.’

The worthy parson sent word he would meet him at the Turk’s Head Coffee-house in the Strand. Accompanied by two friends all ready for combat, Mr. Bates dined there, and, that pleasant meal being over, Captain Crofts and

his second, the Hon. Mr. Lyttelton, entered on the scene. Dinner has a proverbially soothing effect, even to those who thirst for blood, and so, after many preliminaries, Captain Crofts said Mrs. Hartley was ungentlely treated, and confessed Mr. Bates had acted with spirit and propriety in defending her; to which speech the parson replied 'that, being granted, he begged Captain Crofts' pardon for any unguarded expression which arose from a misunderstanding on both sides.' After these handsome speeches, healths were drunk and hands were clasped, and peace was restored between the worthy parson and the gallant captain.

In the early hours of morning the buck was at his best; then, emboldened by wine and an ample supper, he was ready to smash lamps, give false alarms, or make the watchmen measure their lengths upon the ground. Three of these young gentlemen, in crossing St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, one morning, fell upon one of those honest guardians of the peace, whom they seemed to regard as their natural enemies, and beat him unmercifully; the watch seized one of them by part of his waistcoat, and called

out murder, when the valiant young bloods thought proper to take to their heels, leaving a part of the waistcoat behind, in the pocket of which the poor watch found three guineas and sixpence, an amount he considered sufficient compensation for the hard blows he had received.

The bucks patronised all the feats of strength and extraordinary exhibitions of the day, and were much delighted by 'The Original Female Sampson,' after whose performances 'some of the most wonderful phenomenons that ever were known' were shown. 'The Roman Boy stone-eater;' 'The Female Satyr, or Horned Woman, at the end of Piccadilly and Shrug Lane, Coventry Street, Haymarket, where she may be seen every day for one shilling;' 'Primrose, the celebrated Piebald Boy;' Miss P. Burte—otherwise the 'Norfold Fairy, being in her fifteenth year, and measuring thirty-nine inches,' who humbly solicited 'the attention of the nobility and gentry at her rooms in Jermyn Street, St. James's,' were all favourites of the buck. But a special protégé of theirs was Johnson, the Irish equestrian, who at Astley's rode one hundred yards

standing on his head in the saddle, or galloped round the ring on three horses, feats which until then were almost unknown. Dr. Johnson has, by a ponderous sentence, rendered his acrobatic namesake famous. ‘Sir,’ said the lexicographer, ‘such a man should be encouraged; for his performances show the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man.’

The second class of beaux, known as macaronies, were the petted darlings of society, who wore long curls and spying glasses, and who for the most part had travelled and brought back with them not only the fashions of the countries they had visited, but likewise their worst vices. Their heads were compared by one of the publications of the day to a poet’s garret, ‘interiorly, very poorly furnished, but exteriorly plastered, painted, and otherwise finely ornamented.’ They dressed in the extreme of the fashion, and were gorgeous in coloured velvets, brilliant satins, and rich laces, which were all usually imported from Paris; they carried long canes, from which gold and silver tassels were suspended, and held gilt essence-bottles in

their daintily gloved hands; moreover, they simpered blandly, ogled women through their gold-mounted spying glasses, waved their fans, or perfumed handkerchiefs with grace, and walked on their toes with the elasticity of a French dancing-master. When one of these men of fashion, young or old—for, as Walpole said, the old fools will hobble after the young—went abroad, the correspondence of their friends contained repeated requests for patterns of spotted velvets or satins for suits, for embroidered waistcoats, worked stockings, and such like articles of attire.

The Rev. Dr. Warner writes to George Selwyn that he sends him ‘the prettiest work-bag in the world;’ and Lord March, writing to the wit, tells him, ‘Lady Townshend has sent me a fan for you, which I will send by the first opportunity;’ and in return his lordship is sent a muff. ‘The muff you sent me by the Duke of Richmond I like prodigiously; vastly better than if it had been *tigré* or any glaring colour,’ says the earl, and he adds, ‘Several are making after it.’

‘The men imitate the women in almost every-

thing,' says the *Westminster Gazette* for 1773; 'perfumes, paint, and effeminate baubles engross most of their time, and learning is now looked on as unworthy attainment.'

The conversations of the maccaronies were usually inane, and very freely interlarded with what Bob Acres calls the 'curst French lingo;' their idea of love was intrigue, and to wrap up indecencies in the thinnest and most graceful covering, was an art which, according to their opinions, showed excellent parts. These pretty gentlemen lounged about town in the mornings; met in Betty's fruit-shop in St. James's Street, a popular resort; were carried in their chairs to the houses of ladies of quality; or went to see Mr. Samuel Foote, the son of a Cornish gentleman and member of Parliament, whom Walpole disdainfully speaks of as 'the celebrated buffoon,' who vastly entertained the town with caricatures of living persons, which he introduced into his comedies with a faithfulness it was impossible to ignore. Davies said there was hardly a public man in England who had not entered Mr. Foote's theatre with an aching heart, under the apprehension of seeing himself laughed at. Foote

was no bad judge of human nature. 'Demolish a conspicuous character,' he said, 'sink him below our level, then we are pleased, then we chuckle and grin, and toss the half-crown on the counter.' To demolish conspicuous characters became the object of his performances, and gold flowed freely into his coffers in return.

Once he intimated his intention of personating the great Dr. Johnson, whose gruff voice, rolling eyes, brusque manner, and untidy dress offered unusual capabilities for reproduction with comic effect. Now Johnson, all through his life, despised actors.

'Players, sir!' he once said, 'I look upon them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools, to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.'

'But, sir, you will allow some players are better than others?'

'Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others.'

Moreover, perhaps, of all players, he disliked Foote most; his mimicry, he said, was not a talent, but a vice, from which others abstained; and his conversation a mixture of wit and

buffoonery. Hearing that Foote was about to hold him up to ridicule, he was indeed wroth, and gave the mimic to understand that, if he attempted the like, he would chastise him before the whole audience; whereon Foote abandoned his idea.

‘Sir, he knew I would have broken his bones,’ said Dr. Johnson.

But a greater favourite with the maccaronies was Mademoiselle Heinel, a celebrated dancer, at whose appearance the poetry of motion, according to Dr. Burney, first gained the ascendant over music. This lady, a Fleming by birth, was tall, shapely, and very handsome, and had copied her attitudes from classic models.

‘She moves as gracefully slow as Pygmalion’s statue when it was coming into life,’ writes Walpole, ‘and moves her leg round as imperceptibly as if she was dancing in the Zodiac.’

To this lady’s performances, the whole town crowded, but she was the especial admiration of the maccaronies; who, besides the six hundred pounds salary allowed her by the Hon. Mr. Hobart, the manager of the opera, complimented her with a *regallo* of six hundred more from their club.

Robberies were extremely rife in this age, and the cool manner in which they were perpetrated, as well as the easy light in which they were regarded, cannot but astonish us. The newspaper press of the day furnishes us with some extraordinary histories of felons and felony.

‘Friday, between five and six o’clock in the evening,’ says one of these reports, ‘as a gentleman was passing by the end of Fleet Bridge, near a china shop, a fellow came up to him, and, seizing him by the collar and throat, forced him a few yards down towards Bridewell, whilst another took a white-silk purse out of his pocket containing twelve guineas, and attempted his watch, but, having a button-hole at the fob, the chain broke, and they were disappointed; they then threw him over the rails into a ditch, and made off. The gentleman received no manner of hurt, but, having fell on one side, that part was entirely covered with mud; and, as soon as he recovered from his surprise, he called out for help, which a man hearing, that was watering the horses at the coach stand, went with proper assistance, and drew him up with a rope.’

Another paragraph tells that, at two o'clock in the morning, a person in woman's clothes, well-mounted upon a bay gelding, robbed a gentleman upon Barnes Common of his watch and almost eight pounds in money. This genteely-attired robber had a servant in livery awaiting him, who whilst his master filched the money, coolly took that opportunity of girt-ing his saddle tighter.

When entertainments were advertised to take place at Vauxhall or Ranelagh, it was usually announced that 'twelve lusty fellows would patrol the way,' and afford a guard against the knights of the road. But it was not only the suburbs and roads, but the streets and squares likewise, which were beset by these vagabonds, who were wholly unawed by the sight of the pestilential corpses of those who had in life sinned likewise, and which now swung from the gibbets in the Edgeware Road and other public places as a dreadful warning.

On one occasion, a gang of nine thieves were arrested, and after being examined by the Sitting Justices, at the 'Angel and Crown,' White-chapel, were by order walked, hand-cuffed and

fettered through the city, and marched back in the same manner, in order that people who had lately been robbed might have a view of them, and discover if any of these had been the delinquents; most of them were under the age of eighteen.

When John Wilkes had his coach drawn by the mob through the streets, a number of people lost their purses, and some of them complained to the Lord Mayor.

‘I suppose,’ said his lordship, ‘some of Mr. Wilkes’ coach horses have pick your pockets.’

In 1773, a batch of those malefactors, whose presence had been a scourge to all peaceable citizens, were captured, and when sentence had been passed on them, were marched from Newgate to the Docks, from whence they were to embark for the plantations; they were preceded by fifes and drums, playing the lively air, ‘Through the wood, laddie,’ in which they joined, shouting the song right merrily. ‘You are a joyful lot,’ said a respectable spectator. ‘Joyful!’ answered one of the black sheep; ‘you only come with us, and you will find yourself *transported*.’ They were a bad lot, no

doubt, past praying for, as the Rev. Robert Temple discovered when he went to administer consolation to five of them who were about to be executed, but who savagely turned round and beat the good man soundly.

They cared indeed neither for the living nor the dead; one of the journals of the day complains that 'some irregularities' (mark the gentle expression) 'were committed on Saturday night last at Kensington, during the interment of the late Earl of Godolphin, by the crowd assembled on the occasion, some of whom tore the escutcheons off the hearse before the corpse was taken out, and one man took away an escutcheon from the side of the desk when the clergyman was reading the service.'

Here is the account of a droll robbery taken from the *Monthly Chronicle*.

'Tuesday night, about twelve o'clock, a young man, happening to listen to the pleadings of a good-natured nymph in the Strand, a fellow came up to him and demanded what he had to do with his wife, and throwing at the same time a paper of snuff into his eyes, ran off with his hat and wig; the woman slipped away long

before he could recover the use of his sight, proving pretty clearly that it was a preconceived scheme.'

But thieving, like all other crimes, was not confined to the lower classes, and was, according to the press, occasionally practised by persons of quality. 'A woman of no inconsiderable consequence,' says the paper just quoted, 'was last Wednesday evening handed out of a very elegant company for mistaking a gold snuff-box, and supposing it to be her own property at the same time, though she knew it belonged to another lady in the company.'

Another gentle offender was 'on Wednesday turned out of a polite assembly at the west end of the town for making rather too free with a purse of guineas belonging to a lady who was his antagonist;' whilst 'a genteel young gentleman was brought before Sir John Fielding on a suspicion of robbing his master of fifty pounds. He was just going off in a post-chaise with a well-known courtesan of Covent Garden.' A second genteel young fellow named James Sampson, dressed in blue and gold, with a servant to attend him,' was also brought before

the same worthy justice on a charge of forgery.

Even at the Court, gentility was found appropriating its neighbour's goods; for at one of the queen's drawing-rooms held in 1777, Cumberland, who was present, narrates: 'Sir George Warren had his order snatched off his ribbon, encircled with diamonds to the value of £700. Foote was there, and lays it upon the parsons, having secured, as he says, his gold snuff-box in his waistcoat pocket upon seeing so many black gowns in the room.'

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

